

OHIO MANUFACTURER WINS CONTRACT OVER JAPAN TO PRODUCE EXPORTABLE ICE BALL MACHINE

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(NEW YORK, NY)– A small machine shop in Lebanon, Ohio won a global contract, beating the previous Japanese manufacturer and cutting the cost of the product by 50%. The machine shop used product innovation to refine the Ice Ball Machine making it so superior, that it is now under review for international patent protection.

Edrington, the makers of Macallan, Highland Park & Famous Grouse Scotch Whiskey were having the Ice Ball machine manufactured in Japan. Due to bad service, extreme communication difficulties and high prices, Edrington decided to source a new manufacturer. Given their previous problems, the company was weary to work with just any manufacturer. The USA National Innovation Marketplace was the obvious contact choice, as Edrington knew about its strong relationship with the MEP network. A callout was sent through the network and TechSolve the southern Ohio MEP was the first to respond. TechSolve then contacted D&E Machine Co. to ascertain if the company had the manufacturing capabilities. Kent Coomer the owner of D&E, saw the Ice Ball Machine and immediately knew it was something his team could reproduce.

Coomer started working on the project right away and created a prototype similar to the original; however, he could see that improvements were needed.

A lifting device was developed for easier and more hygienic handling of the ice ball and a sleeve design was incorporated to eliminate the guide rods.

The company is now in the process of trying to protect the new design with a US patent followed by worldwide protection.

Completed units have been exported to Scotland for testing and D&E is waiting for the bulk order, which could consist of well over 1000 units. The collaboration came at the perfect time for D&E. The day before the phone call from TechSolve, Coomer and his wife Kim were debating whether to commit to purchasing a new property and taking on the financial commitment and stress. The Ice Ball Machine is the one product the company has been searching for since its opening in 1990. "This is the type product we have been waiting for to make us stand out from our competition and give rise to a continuous manufacturing line," said Kim Coomer. The Ice Ball Machine will be needed wherever Macallan Scotch is sold. D&E hopes this partnership will create the need to hire more staff and purchase new milling machines.

The whole process shows the strength of the MEP network and the power of relationships. Without each party referring the other, the manufacturing would not have come to the US and American families would not enjoy the future revenue.

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