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**Five Person Boston Company Launches New Hair Product and Projects Millions in Sales Thanks to Guidance of MassMEP**

*MassMEP Walks Company Through Product Design, Testing and Manufacturing and Quality Processes*

**Boston, MA** - The hair care retail market is a billion dollar industry populated with giant corporations with seemingly limitless resources and thousands of different products. So when New Basics, Inc., a five person consumer product design and manufacturing firm in Boston decided to enter the market with a new product, they knew the competition would be stiffer than a head full of hair-spray.

Although it is a small company, New Basics doesn't lack anything in the department of innovative thinking and design. New Basics has kept its full time staffing small since its founding and relies heavily on outsourcing most of its engineering and manufacturing to a talented group of contractors. When the company completed the design of its second generation EZcolour™ Hair Coloring Applicator in the Fall of 2003, it knew it had a winning product. But before they could move from the drawing board to store shelves, they needed advice, counseling and guidance in the complex process of molding and manufacturing the new product and conducting initial trials and pilot phases.

New Basics management contacted Joe Rizzo, a lead project manager with the MassMEP to help them through this critical product development area. Joe has served as New Basics' manufacturing advisor and collaborated closely with their senior management team and product design firm.

The collaboration has been a success, and just over a year after beginning work with Rizzo, New Basics is projecting sales of EZcolour to reach more than one million units annually.

"The goal of the MassMEP is to work with small manufacturers to help them access the means to compete against large-scale and overseas competition and to develop the skills to meet the daily challenges of the manufacturing world," said Rizzo. "When I met with New Basics, they already had a great idea and product design, but they needed guidance in establishing a high quality manufacturing process and systematize their pilot testing of the product."

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Rizzo participated in the final design review of Ezcolour, working closely with New Basics' management team and their design firm, providing technical assistance in identifying the areas critical to high volume manufacturing. He also reviewed the design of the molds, and the capacity plans for the scale-up of production. Throughout the process he provided input to help improve the molds, and contributed to the development of a comprehensive Quality Manual.

They have also begun evaluating a strategic manufacturing diversification plan developed by Rizzo and MassMEP specifically for New Basics, to help them broker deals with domestic manufacturers in addition to its contracted production company in China. Even with a small staff, the company has worldwide sales goals, and understands that in order to sell on multiple continents, having only one contract manufacturer will not be adequate to meet their goals.

New Basics expects that a certain percentage of its product portfolio will continue to be produced overseas but it also has set its sights on manufacturing in the United States. Working closely with Rizzo and MassMEP, the company found that certain aspects of manufacturing can be produced in America at competitive rates.

"We were in a state of manufacturing disarray before we met Joe Rizzo," said Lorraine Dina Chu, president of New Basics, Inc. "We're a small company with limited resources going up against large corporations in a highly competitive industry. Joe has served as an invaluable consultant and advisor to our company in the areas of product development, high volume manufacturing, sourcing and quality assurance."

Chu says that throughout the development of the product, a series of pilot runs helped to demonstrate variability in product quality over the course of production, resulting in a number of defects. Identifying these issues before rolling out in scale will assure that New Basics will succeed in selling a product that not only is novel but performs to consumers' expectations. Working with Rizzo and the design team, the company identified the root causes of the defects and conducted what is called a Failure Effects Mode Analysis, designed to help eliminate the flaws during the full production runs.

With full-scale production of the new product underway, New Basics is negotiating with major drug store and grocery chains to stock EZcolour and the product is already being sold in retailers across the country as well as on the web through e-tailers.

"Joe Rizzo and the MassMEP give small manufacturers like New Basics a strong chance to compete and succeed," said Chu. "We are grateful for the resources the organization offers and the excellence in the advice they provide for the local manufacturing industry."

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The MassMEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP system is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2,000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits and enhanced global competitiveness. For more information, please visit [www.massmep.org](http://www.massmep.org), or phone 1-800-MEP-4MFG.

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