

Sealed Air Partners with Non-Profit Adding Jobs for Americans who are Blind

Sealed Air Jiffy® Mailers the Right Solution for Government Agencies Vendor

Roughly one out of every five Americans age 15 and older are classified as disabled according to a US Census Bureau study. Of this population, there are 600,000 who are legally blind and 120,000 who are totally blind. The unemployment rate among people who are blind is over 70%. Alphapointe, a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with revenue of \$32,764,428 million in the 2012 fiscal year, is the largest single employer of people who are blind and visually impaired in the state of Missouri. Alphapointe and its employees manufacture, assemble, warehouse and distribute high-quality products to customers nationwide ranging from pharmaceutical bottles, medical supplies and a wide range of office products including writing instruments, tape products, and computer security lock products. Most recently, Alphapointe decided to add mailer products to their portfolio and looked to Sealed Air's product expertise and Jiffy® Mailer brand to enter this new market.

Alphapointe and Ability One Program Make a Difference

Alphapointe is the region's largest resource for people with vision loss. Proceeds from product sales support employment and Vision Rehabilitation and Education programs for children, youth and adults. Alphapointe's mission is to empower people with vision loss to maximize their own independence through training, education, opportunities and employment. As an affiliate of National Industries for the Blind (NIB), the largest network of associated non-profit agencies employing people who are blind, Alphapointe is eligible to sell an exclusive line of products and services through the AbilityOne Program.

The AbilityOne Program is a federal initiative to help people who are blind or otherwise disabled find employment through nonprofit agencies that sell products to the U.S. government. The program manufactures the SKILCRAFT® brand of products, encompassing a line of over 3,000 items including janitorial equipment, office supplies, medical supplies, tools and uniforms.

To add offerings to this federally-regulated portfolio, products must meet an extensive list of requirements set by Alphapointe's primary customer, the federally-administered General Services Administration (GSA). Therefore, when Alphapointe made the decision to add mailers to their selection of office supplies, the list of potential partners was narrowed to companies approved for GSA work.

Discovering Sealed Air

In April 2009, the NIB successfully identified two types of Jiffy® branded padded envelopes that met the rigorous standards required by the GSA for such product characteristics as side seal strength and tear resistance. In addition to meeting the GSA requirements, the leaders at the NIB felt that Jiffy® Padded and JiffyLite® mailers fit well with Alphapointe's capabilities and expanding line of office products and subsequently issued the project to the organization to explore for AbilityOne product development and co-brand partnership.

Building a Partnership

That December, a team of Sealed Air sales employees visited Alphapointe's ISO 9001:2008 certified facilities in Kansas City and were introduced to the AbilityOne program and its important mission in action. Sealed Air, thrilled by the prospect of partnering with such an inspiring customer, immediately invited the CEO of Alphapointe to visit Sealed Air's manufacturing facilities where the final decision to move forward with the partnership was made.

Initially, Alphapointe considered sourcing equipment so the organization could employ additional people who were blind or visually impaired to create mailers onsite. But it was determined that equipment to produce the mailers exceeded Alphapointe's capacity. Sealed Air offered to produce the blank mailers and send them to Alphapointe's facilities, where their employees would then provide product printing and packaging. Because the labor required to print and package labels in the Alphapointe facility adds value to the finished product, this arrangement enables the Alphapointe operation to qualify under GSA's specifications and requirements for the AbilityOne program.

To assist with the onboarding of the packaging operation, Sealed Air allowed Alphapointe executives to observe the factory process. Sealed Air also provided sample mailers for Alphapointe to test printing settings.

The project was officially approved by the NIB in September 2011, and Alphapointe began production in October 2011, offering Sealed Air Jiffy® mailer products to the organization's full sales channel of GSA customers in January 2012.

A Job Well Done

Implementation of this project not only helped to create a new revenue stream and add 11 new JiffyLite® and Jiffy® padded mailer SKUs to Alphapointe's product portfolio, but went a step further. Furthering the organization's mission, the addition of Jiffy® products created employment for two visually impaired associates dedicated to the printing and packaging of mailer products, and it is anticipated that this employment opportunity will grow to four full-time positions.

Alphapointe provided positive feedback on the accommodating nature of the work done by the Sealed Air team, particularly Sealed Air's willingness to create a unique 'offline' factory process for printing the mailers onsite to help ensure proper onboarding of their employees. The non-profit also benefitted from the short lead times implemented at Sealed Air, which enabled Alphapointe to react quickly to demand shifts.

Alphapointe reports that both Jiffy® products are contributing to an upward sales trend in the company and have met no resistance from customers, including GSA, Military Base Supply Centers, AbilityOne approved stocking distributors and various GSA discount program vendors.

Moving Forward

Due to the exceptional service and products exceeding those requirements put in place by the GSA, Sealed Air and Alphapointe are currently evaluating the feasibility of partnering on a new Jiffy® TuffGard® project that would involve Alphapointe printing on the mailers for the Veteran's

Administration Centralized Mailer Order Pharmacies. Alphapointe also is a fabricator for Sealed Air Instapak® packaging foam.

The successful partnership between Sealed Air and Alphapointe highlights the impact of the Sealed Air brand, as well as the importance of working with customers to develop the right solution for their business. Additionally, these types of contracts are a proven and efficient vehicle for sales opportunities with government vendors. To aid in vetting promising sales leads, and to see which Sealed Air products are already approved for agency use, please visit www.GSA.gov.