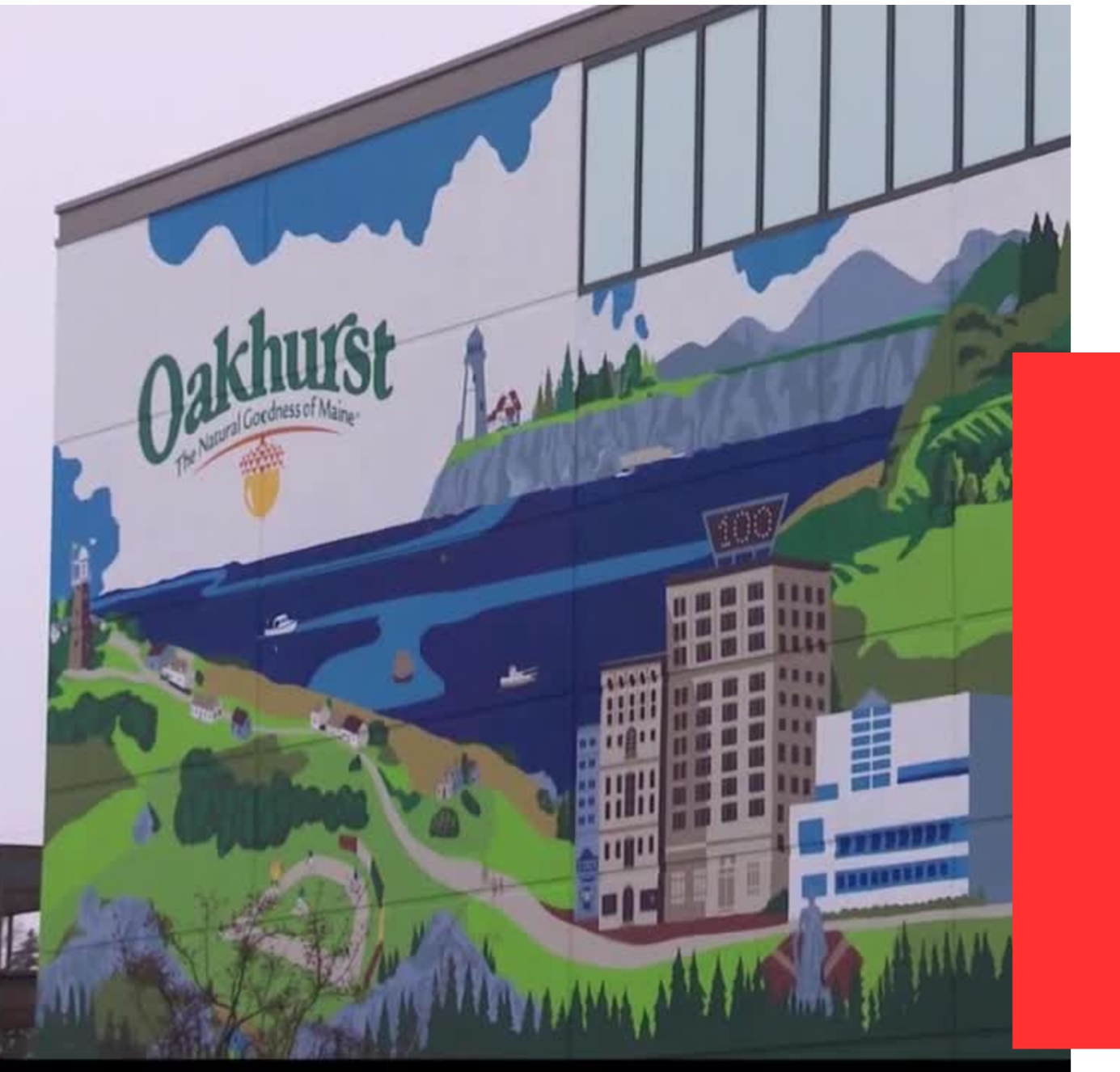




# CASE STUDY | FROM URGENCY TO IMPACT

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How a Maine Manufacturer Solved a Workforce Crisis Through Strategic Collaboration

# Overview

When Oakhurst Dairy, a Maine-based manufacturer with over a century of history, faced the potential shutdown of a production line due to severe staffing shortages, they turned to the Manufacturers Association of Maine (MAME). Through MAME's workforce development committee—the Employee Growth Services (EGS) Group—Oakhurst not only filled every open position but also transformed its approach to recruitment and retention, building a foundation for long-term workforce success.

Despite significant investment in recruitment efforts, Oakhurst wasn't attracting qualified applicants. Standard job boards and paid ads weren't producing results, and retention was dropping. With operations on the line, a new approach was needed—and fast.

## A Strategic Response Through MAME

Oakhurst's HR Manager, Davielle Hawks, reached out to MAME, which quickly engaged its workforce development committee—the Employee Growth Services (EGS) Group—to assess the situation and lead a coordinated response.

The EGS Core Group, consisting of:

- Manufacturers Association of Maine (MAME)
- Synergy Workforce Solutions
- Destination Occupation

...quickly analyzed the current approach and collaborated to design both short-term solutions and long-term strategies.

### The Challenge

- 35 unfilled positions at Portland facility
- Risk of eliminating a production line
- Extremely high interview no-show rate (9 out of 10)
- Existing job advertising efforts were failing
- Candidate quality and retention were at crisis levels



# Activating Workforce Partners

One of EGS's most impactful steps was connecting Oakhurst to a network of trusted workforce and education partners, including:

- Career and technical education providers
- Adult education programs
- Youth-focused career development organizations
- Vocational rehabilitation services
- State and local career centers
- Veterans organizations

These organizations became ambassadors for Oakhurst, helping to share job openings, elevate the company's employer brand, and connect qualified candidates from across the region.

## Tactical Solutions Implemented

- **Developed a short recruitment video** to showcase Oakhurst's culture and available roles
- **Built a dedicated landing page** separate from product marketing, featuring:
  - Job info
  - Benefits
  - Testimonials
  - Direct contact to the hiring manager
- **Launched a social media ad campaign** to drive qualified traffic
- **Organized facility tours** and info sessions for workforce partners and potential candidates
- **Shared content across the broader EGS network** to amplify awareness and reach



## Results

- **100% of positions filled**
- **Retention rate flipped from 20/80 to 80/20**
- **Candidate quality improved significantly**
- **A steady talent pipeline reestablished and expanded**



## Beyond Immediate Needs

After stabilizing staffing levels, EGS worked with Oakhurst to build long-term workforce strength:

- Conducted internal and external assessments of employer perception
- Defined Oakhurst's Employee Value Proposition
- Launched a refreshed recruitment marketing campaign to position the company as an employer of choice in the region

What began as an urgent triage effort evolved into a strategic workforce initiative—with lasting impact.

## Takeaways for Maine Manufacturers

- **There's no one-size-fits-all solution**—tailored, data-informed strategies drive results
- **Recruitment is marketing**—and should reflect a company's culture and values
- **Community partnerships matter**—strong relationships unlock access to untapped talent pools
- **Employer brand matters**—telling your story helps candidates see where they belong

## The Value of Connection

MAME's Employee Growth Services Group brings together workforce leaders, educators, and employers to collaboratively address the challenges facing Maine's manufacturing community.

This Oakhurst Dairy case study demonstrates the kind of support and outcomes possible through aligned partnerships, strategic thinking, and a commitment to action.





# EGS CORE GROUP



**Mike Roughton** | Executive Director  
**Manufacturers Association of Maine**



**John Lewis** | Managing Partner & Co-founder  
**Synergy Workforce Solutions**



**Chelsea Tufts** | Director of Employer Branding  
**Synergy Workforce Solutions**



**Rachel Knight** | Founder & CEO  
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