

MFG Day - A Time to Celebrate Entrepreneurs

Sierra Coating Supports MFG Day and the Innovators Making It Possible

On October 2nd, 2015, we celebrate American entrepreneurship with National Manufacturing (MFG) Day. Manufacturers across the country will open their doors for tours and educational events to raise awareness of STEM education programs and celebrate progress made within the manufacturing industry.

From new start-ups to family-owned businesses that have been crafting goods for generations, our industry would not exist without the new ideas and solutions of innovators and entrepreneurs alike. Companies, like Sierra Coating Technologies, are proud to offer the services that help bring these new projects to life.

As a contract and toll manufacturer, Sierra Coating provides laminating services on-demand for all scales and project applications — especially those that have never been seen before.

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To help entrepreneurs understand the steps of taking their idea from prototype to high-volume production, our team of experts at Sierra Coating created the ultimate cheat sheet. One of the most critical keys for developing a new product design is the staging and gating process. Our team outlined four steps for young entrepreneurs to keep in mind as they pursue a new project:

1. Consult Research & Development specialists who can offer insight, experience and expertise.
2. Determine the feasibility of your project. Does it hold up to economic analysis?
3. Develop and test your prototype.
4. Continually utilize the staging and gating process to enhance the quality and reduce the risk of failure.

The Sierra Coating team is well-equipped to help minimize the costs and risks associated with new product development through our contract manufacturing services. The treated paper services we offer include a facility for high-volume production, and prototype development can often utilize the very same machines.

We're lucky to work with brilliant new ideas every day. Learn more about our process at Sierra Coating and how you can get a new project off the ground by downloading our new eBook, ***The Stages and Gates of Prototype to High-Volume Production***. We wish all the innovators and creative makers a happy and inspiring MFG Day!



Common Roadblocks in Product Development

In today's business world, new companies seem to sprout up all the time—and fade into obscurity just as quickly. While there isn't a set roadmap that leads to success, it's certainly helpful for companies to spend an appropriate amount of time conceptualizing their products.

You've probably heard the saying "work smarter, not harder," and that's exactly

what successful companies do; they avoid poor production practices and use informed decision-making for better results. Success is never a guarantee, but if you learn to work smarter, your company can avoid common problems that inhibit product development.

Choosing the Wrong Manufacturer

It's easy to be enticed by low-cost production solutions (usually found overseas), but you need to invest in a quality manufacturer. If you entrust your product to a company that can't handle high-production volumes, or can't fully understand the design or specs of your product, find someone else to work with.

When you find a reliable manufacturer, provide them with every detail possible (metrics, tolerances, etc.) so you can both be on the same page during the development stage. Also, be sure to provide manufacturers with functional tests to ensure the correct operation of your product.

Continuously Adding Features

At some point during the development process, you or a member of your team might have ideas about features to add to the product. Though that seems like a perfectly normal practice, you must learn to avoid it and exercise the proper restraint. By continuing to add more features, you might change the intended use of the product or make it too complex for many consumers to understand.

Launching a simpler product is many times a smarter play. Don't alienate potential customers with your overloaded product; launch something simple that solves a particular problem, then learn how you can improve the product with customer feedback. You should be careful about adding excessive features to your products as it comes paired with additional complexity and expense.



Poor Balancing Between Pre- and Post-launch Learnings

You should be learning more about your product before it hits the market, but the product launch also has a lot to teach you. Once your product gets into the

hands of consumers, the experience will give you greater insight on what works, and what can be improved upon.

For example, maybe after the product's launch, you realized that a certain packaging material would have suited your needs better, or perhaps the package design isn't attracting as many people as it could be. Details such as these can help you develop an outstanding product; conduct rigorous user research to discover how to improve your existing product, and how to improve your future products.

Let Us Help You

Sierra Coating Technologies LLC can assist you with the coating or lamination portion of your product development needs. We incorporate a proven development process and share our expert ideas with you, helping you develop your intellectual property. If you require a coated or laminated product manufactured to defined quality specifications in a repeatable and economically viable process, contact us today to get started.

Celebrating the Holidays with Sierra Coating's Adhesive Coatings!

It's that time of year again! Actually, holiday gift buying season starts earlier every year, but by now the odds are good that you have already picked up gifts either in the store or online. The odds are also extremely good that most of the products going under the tree are packaged in heat sealed blister packs, laminated or labeled.

At Sierra Coating, our adhesive coating capabilities play a major role in packaging many of the products you will buy or receive this season. Thanks to 20 years of experience in coating and laminating, we offer our customers the best in

a long list of adhesive coating service



Adhesives

- Heat-activated adhesives
- Pressure sensitive adhesives
- Cold seal or Cohesive adhesives
- Laminating adhesives for similar and dissimilar substrates with wet or dry laminations

Labels

- Pressure sensitive
- Water activated
- Permanent
- Repositionable
- Weather resistant



One the main advantages of relying on Sierra Coatings is our ability to customize our adhesive coatings to your unique needs. We take into account every variable, such as the activation temperature of your packaging equipment and dwell time to

determine the perfect coating for your application. The same custom and comprehensive approach goes into our lamination capabilities.

If your current adhesive coating and laminating services are putting a lump of coal in your stocking, then visit our website, or contact the adhesive coating and laminating experts at Sierra Coating today!

The Rebirth of American Manufacturing

The reshoring of America is underway and gaining momentum. According to a survey from the Boston Consulting Group, 38% of the American manufacturing

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executives they polled are in the process of moving production back or at least considering the move to the U.S.A.

It was not too long ago that most manufacturers were touting the virtues of moving out of America to places like China and Central America. So why the change of heart? Why have companies joined Sierra Coating in embracing the “Made in America” movement? While patriotism does play a role in the decision, in the end, business is business and profitability is king. No matter what continent you make your products, if you cannot keep your costs down, the odds of remaining competitive are low.



At Sierra Coating, we believe a variety of factors play a role in the rebirth of

American manufacturing. They include:

- **Less Shipping**

The farther away you manufacture or convert your goods, the longer the shipping routes and times. Shorter trip equals lower costs, it is that simple.

- **Automation**

For years, countries like China and Vietnam could claim lower labor costs. However, thanks to innovations in manufacturing automation, it is possible to make high quality products in America with less labor, faster, and more accurately.

- **Regulations**

While the U.S has always had tough and often costly environmental regulations, it is only recently that other countries have begun to catch up. The cost saving from less regulation overseas is starting to shrink.

- **Pride**

It is hard to replace the pride you get from actually seeing a product come to life. We think that it is this sense of accomplishment has been missing from America for far too long. Reshoring means having pride in your work, your products, your people, and best of all, your country.

- **Natural Gas**

At Sierra, we have become more competitive because of less reliance on foreign energy. There is a wealth of natural gas and energy to be used which provides a financial advantage.

While there are other more complex reasons for America's manufacturing renaissance, these five get at the core of the movement. The Sierra Coating family is excited about the future of manufacturing in the U.S., and we could not be more proud to be leading the charge towards a better America.

The Art of New Product Development

Creating, producing, and marketing an innovative and groundbreaking product is not an easy proposition. The pitfalls and risks are many and the costs can be great in terms of both time and money. Of course, succeeding means having a corner of the marketplace all to yourself, this can lead to profits and a boost to the cache of your company. The key to the entire process is having a partner rich in both experience and skill. At Sierra Coating, when it comes to custom

coated and laminated specialty substrates, we are *the* new product development specialists. To discover what makes Sierra Coating a leader, let us take a closer look at our process of bringing a new product into being.



- **Raw Materials**

Whether you are dealing with a nonwoven, plastic, paper, or paperboard product, Sierra Coating will source, test, and choose the perfect raw materials and chemicals to fit your projects needs. Many times, because we have such a vast experience and selection of materials, we can point our clients in a previously hidden direction

- **Cost-Effectiveness**

Running lab tests on materials are just a part of picking the right one. We also run extensive economic studies and price out materials to match your budget.

- **Trials**

After arriving at the optimal materials, we take our clients through the often-difficult trial process. This entails picking a day and laying out a highly detailed trial plan, including all possible manufacturing techniques, quality control demands and complex design of experiments. On trial day we make up to 10+ versions of your product that you can run through your own specific testing and focus groups.

- **Tightening Up**

After you complete your testing and trials, Sierra Coating is there to make all necessary changes or upgrades quickly and cost-effectively. This also includes setting up all necessary converting, printing and packaging.

- **Bring It Home**

After all the exhaustive test, trials and quality audits, Sierra Coating is there to manufacture your new product, help with inventory launch, and help get the completed supply chain working.

For us, the bottom line is that we never let you stray from the path to success. We take all the guesswork, and hopefully the doubt, out of the process. If you are

looking to create and launch a new and innovative product, then you need Sierra Coating on your side!

The Beauty of Paper Over Plastic

There is nothing like smelling a forest filled with beautiful plastic pine trees on a cool fall day. Wait. OK how about going green by planting five plastic trees for everyone you cut down? No, that doesn't work either.

The point? No matter how many "green" and "recycled" labels you slap on petroleum-based plastic products, they cannot and will never be as renewable as paper. Unlike trees, oil and gas don't put CO₂ back into the atmosphere and trees are a homegrown product that unlike plastic are not beholden to the ups and downs of oil and gas prices.

If it is both more environmentally friendly and often more affordable, why aren't more things made out of paper? One of the main reasons has always been that plastic outperforms paper at some tasks, like waterproofing and sealing.

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At Sierra, thanks to our innovative technology and methods we are bridging this ever-shrinking performance gap everyday. Sierra is able to coat the back or front of paper in order to enhance its ability. A great example is food and cleaning product packaging. Sierra can create water barriers and heat sealed packages, all

with our state-of-the-art recyclable coatings. It is hard to be more “green” than replacing PVC and other plastics with recyclable paper.

One of the other benefits to using paper is that major retailers like Walmart are now demanding that products reach very high standards of recyclability. The Walmart Sustainability Index grades the “Greenness” of products, if you don’t get a high enough index score, your product will not end up on the shelves of the world’s biggest retailers, and no one can afford for that to happen! Once again, the solution is paper, and thanks to Sierra, you can now easily replace plastics with coated paper products and suffer no fall-off in quality.

The next time you think you have no choice but to use hard or impossible to recycle plastics in your packaging, think again.

Think Green. Think Affordable. Think Effective. Think Paper.