



## USEFULL, BETTER EVERYDAY CHOICES FOR THE PLANET

Reducing everyday plastic waste with reusable, environmentally friendly products and the help of technology.

“The Gembah team has really helped us. We’ve gotten our two first production runs done with Gembah, built strong relationships with factories, and gotten to launch new projects because Gembah saved the day.”

*Alison Rogers, Founder & CEO*



### SOLUTION

- Product Management
- Factory Auditing
- Quality Control
- Shipping



GEMBAH

### RESULTS



#### PRODUCTION

Successfully took over production after a local brokers failure to provide promised inventory



#### QUALITY

Took product through quality assurance and quality control



#### SUSTAINABILITY

Located a factory capable of using recycled steel and sourced recycled steel



#### MANAGEMENT

Managed two production runs, catching up to demand and helping earn back their customers’ trust



## CHALLENGES

- Fulfilling orders after previous supplier disappeared
- Took over product management for mass production on a short timeline
- Located a factory capable of using recycled steel
- Sourcing recycled steel

## BETTER FOR THE PLANET

Small items can make a big impact, and that's what Alison Rogers had in mind when she developed the concept for USEFULL.

Alison noticed all the plastic waste in the cafeteria in her office and had the idea to offer reusable bamboo cups as an alternative. She was surprised to find that most people didn't mind using sustainable products, and so her idea was born.

USEFULL makes sustainable, reusable, high-quality cups and bowls to combat the use of single-use plastics. Their products use stainless steel to create premium, vacuum-sealed containers to keep food and drinks at the correct temperature. They added a QR code to the bottom of the container, which would allow customers to check out their cups and bowls from their school or work cafeteria, similar to checking out a book from the library, and then return them within 2 days to be washed in USEFULL's partner commercial kitchens.

Orders began rolling in and Alison placed a large order with a local inventory broker, who promised delivery by August. But the delivery never came. Alison was out tens of thousands of dollars with no product and a group of frustrated customers.

## A TRUSTWORTHY PARTNER

After she explained her situation, Gembah assured Alison that they could help her fulfill her production demands. Not only did Gembah come alongside Alison in a terribly unfortunate situation, but they were able to help turn it around. Though Alison didn't have in-depth experience working with factories and managing production, Gembah walked her through the process, supporting her as she learned and guiding her as she navigated new relationships.

Gembah reached out to the factory Alison had already been working with and took over walking the products through quality assurance and quality control, managed production, and shipped the end product to customers. One drawback of this original factory was that they did not work with recycled steel, so Gembah found another factory that was better able to meet USEFULL's needs. Not only could the new factory use recycled steel, but they also had several certifications needed for the end product.

## MOVING FORWARD

Despite the late date that Gembah took over the project, they were able to get the first shipment out to USEFULL's waiting customers. Orders continued coming in, and Gembah managed one more production run for USEFULL, guiding Alison through working with the factory and successfully managing the product.

USEFULL's products have been wildly successful. They recently won a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant, a highly competitive grant which will allow USEFULL to study and implement more sustainable food containers. Their continued success wouldn't have been possible without Gembah's expertise and ability to come in at the last moment and turn the situation around. USEFULL has been so successful in their mission to replace single-use cups and bowls that they've hired a full-time team to take over the work Gembah started for them.

"We have a serious waste issue, and we're trying to solve that," said Alison. "We're creating mountains of waste. It's an environmental health issue, but it's a human health issue too. We're negatively impacted by eating and drinking out of plastics. USEFULL is my contribution to getting closer to living plastic free." Alison Rogers