SITUATION
Our Client, a Project Engineer for a food processing operation, was caught with multiple projects and a new operations manager committed to improvement. With a need to move existing projects along and to start critical projects, the manager turned to Sterling Engineering to solve the capacity problem.

STERLING SOLUTION
Sterling’s executive determined the best result would be using Sterling’s Project Engineering Team to supplement this manager. Sterling’s veteran team added experience to begin the long-awaited Laboratory Expansion plan on paper.

The client’s team was gathered to understand what improvements would make a more effective laboratory. Weekly meetings were held and with management participation from the Operation’s Manager, Director of Quality, QC manager, Corporate Director of Engineering, and even the General Manager from corporate HQ.

Large Plotter Drawings were sent from Sterling’s office for each meeting so red-line modifications could capture the needs of the organization. The project scope was developed in a rolling wave style. New requirements surged during the weekly progress meetings, and the design began to take shape. Sterling’s team gathered multiple budgetary costs for all items including walk-in coolers, expansion of existing automated storage tower for lab samples, sensory lab upgrade, samples shipping station, and flexible work stations for lab projects.

The KPIs (Key Performance Indicator) provided:
• Expanding Storage
• Expanded Lab Testing Capacity
• Lab consolidation
• Project Phases to maintain QC testing during construction

PROJECT SNAPSHOT
• An expansion of the Quality Test Lab and the implementation of a new Test Laboratory was needed.
• The PM handled resourcing and bids for Architectural firms and equipment vendors.
• Sterling developed an emergency Process Layout and Process Flow Diagram to protect new business.
Previous projects were handled entirely by General Contractors. Due to the critical nature of laboratory work, Sterling and the client discussed alternative ways of planning this expansion. All agreed that architects would add value to this project. Researching the relevant associations, Sterling contacted five Architects that specialized in food and laboratory design. Three were able to bid on the project after walkthroughs of the new laboratory area.

During the laboratory project, a new processing line project became urgent. Sterling changed priorities and shifted with the needs of the client and their customers. Sterling’s Engineering Project Team developed the floor plan layout, process flow diagram, and helped to locate processing equipment with the shortest lead time. These items were delivered in weeks as they were critically needed.

Result
The engineer received a promotion to Engineering Manager of this facility. The new processing operation went into fabrication. The laboratory expansion project team selected the Architect.