Sage MAS 500: A Sweet, Not-So-Nutty Solution for Affy Tapple

Ask Midwesterners about caramel apples and they get nostalgic about Affy Tapple. Started in 1948, Affy Tapple is the region's premier caramel apple and specialty confection company. Its apples come only from selected orchards, so they're fresher than fruit in grocery stores. Caramel for dipping is homemade at the Chicago area kitchen every day.

Affy Tapple's signature apples are made to order and sold to grocery chains and fundraisers. The company also produces Mrs. Prindable's gourmet hand-dipped apples, available in gourmet stores, specialty retailers, and on direct-sale TV.

New ownership in 1995 transformed Affy Tapple from a small mom-and-pop operation into a major manufacturing firm. With the acquisition of Mrs. Prindable's in 2000, operations changed. It was high time to replace their entry-level accounting package with a robust accounting system that included manufacturing and distribution capabilities. Sage MAS 500 ERP was the answer.

Streamlined Ordering and Shipping

Thousands of orders come in to Affy Tapple every day during the high season. Sage MAS 500 captures them from an electronic data interchange (EDI) and automatically generates sales orders. "Order entry tasks that used to require eight man-hours a day are done now in about five minutes," says Carmel A. Cooke, Affy Tapple's CFO. "Not only are keying errors eliminated, but the system also provides documentation of the order. An EDI or e-mail confirmation is immediately generated, sending customers detailed tracking information."

Credit card processing used to be keyed manually for phone or fax orders, taking eight man-hours a day during the peak season. Now the company's credit card verification system integrates with Sage MAS 500. Data is extracted from the system as a batch file in a matter of minutes.

Shipping is another area where Sage MAS 500 has brought major improvements. "It's great, because we can now pull information directly from Sage MAS 500's SQL tables into our shipping application," explains Rob LaForte, technology coordinator. "Information such as address, items, and quantities purchased goes electronically to create labels and packing

Customer:

Affy Tapple, LLC

Industry:

Food manufacturer

Location:

Niles, Illinois

System:

Sage MAS 500

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Advanced Planning and Scheduling
- Cash Management
- General Ledger
- Inventory Management
- Inventory Replenishment
- Purchase Order
- Sales Order

CHALLENGE

Manual inventory management, packing and labeling systems made it difficult to respond to market opportunities and guarantee same-day shipments of highly perishable goods.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 500 with a full suite of financial, distribution, and manufacturing modules with EDI integration.

RESULTS

Savings of at least 40 man-hours per day in creating labels and packing slips, 8 hours a day in credit card processing, plus instant access to data for responding to large-scale order requests.

slips. Before we were spending 40 man-hours a day to generate labels and packing slips. Now the whole procedure takes two hours."

Better data integrity has translated into faster fulfillment. Because caramel apples are perishable, Affy Tapple must fill and ship orders the same day. Before implementing Sage MAS 500, packing and labeling inefficiencies presented many challenges. Now same-day shipments are a breeze.

Modernized Manufacturing

The Advanced Manufacturing and Inventory Management modules in Sage MAS 500 have helped improve production and opened up new sales opportunities due to better access to operational data. "We're much more responsive now that we've got Sage MAS 500," says Cooke. "If a customer calls us with a last-minute order a week from now, we can look in the system, check our inventory levels for ingredients and packaging, and commit production capacities. Before, we had to walk around the warehouse to do a physical count, which was totally unfeasible. Now we can discuss things with customers on a real-time basis, and strike while the iron is hot."

The manufacturing module allows Affy Tapple to be more precise in estimating and pricing. The system tracks raw material and labor costs and monitors quantities of apples that must be scrapped. "Although we're still learning the system, we can see that it will definitely give us the data we need to make any necessary operational changes," says LaForte. "This will ultimately improve profitability."

Cooke says she is very pleased with the functionality provided by Sage MAS 500. "The system is sweet," she comments. "It gives us exactly what we need right now. But it's also scalable, and will grow as we do. If we move into the business-to-consumer market, or if we want to add enhancements like bar coding to our operations, we will be able to expand using our existing IT resources—which is wonderful."

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