Aptean Food & Beverage ERP
JustFood Edition

Madrona Specialty Foods Streamlines Processes and Increases Visibility with Aptean Food & Beverage ERP



Industry
Food & Beverage

Challenges

- Multiple independent platforms for business processes and data
- Lack of cohesion between different departments

Benefits

- Up and running in 6 months with minimal disruption
- Increased departmental transparency and connectivity
- One integrated platform with all data in one location

Madrona Specialty Foods is a leading producer of artisanal crackers and cookies based out of Seattle, WA. Operating as La Panzanella Artisanal Foods Co., it was founded in 1989 as a small deli serving traditional Italian bread throughout Seattle.

Today, Madrona's operations have grown to support two production plants and a corporate headquarters. The company is still family-run and has managed to maintain its small-company values. Its commitment to its employees and to creating delicious, artisan-crafted products has been key to its success and its plans for future growth.

Since 2017, Madrona has relied on Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *JustFood Edition* to streamline its operational processes and gain better insight into its sales, finance, and warehousing data.

Disparate Systems and Lack of Visibility and Food-Specific Capabilities

Before choosing Aptean, Madrona was using separate accounting and manufacturing systems to run its business. These tools operated independently of each other, meaning that the systems had to push and pull data to meet regulatory requirements. Some of the crucial food manufacturing functionality that Madrona required, like lot coding, had to be traced and reviewed from outside the software, resulting in a lack of end-to-end visibility.



> "Being able to look at our data in one location and know that it is **accurate** allows us to determine if we are on track with our costs, expenses and profitability, helping us make better **decisions**."
>
> **Chris Perrott**, Supply Chain Director, Madrona Specialty Foods

For Chris Perrott, supply chain director at Madrona, the need for a single solution was clear. "We wanted a system that would be a single source of information for us. That way, we wouldn't have to go through three systems to try to figure out how to get the data we needed - we wanted one single solution."

Another issue Madrona was experiencing was the lack of food-specific functionality in its existing systems. Processes like lot coding, expiration date management and quality control were extremely manual or required pulling multiple reports from different systems. Realizing it could not maintain its growth on its current platforms, Madrona began searching for a single solution that included the food-specific functionality it required to manage its operations.

A Single Source of Information

After choosing Aptean's solution primarily because of its capability to connect departments, data and processes, the team at Madrona implemented the software in only six months. Madrona's initial go-live success stemmed from the team's decision to focus on implementing Aptean's finance, quality, warehouse, sales and manufacturing features first.

"Because of the platform Aptean Food & Beverage ERP is built on, the system allows you to handle both finance and manufacturing. Having these core features in place helps us understand the relationship between these departments and address cross-functional issues," says Perrott.

Perrot points to the lack of visibility and control Madrona had over changes to lot coding and the complexity of reporting against those changes before implementing Aptean Food & Beverage ERP as an example.

“What the system does really well,” says Perrott, “is track changes, which was always an issue for us. Now our team can go in and make the necessary corrections to lot codes, and the system registers and transmits those changes throughout the entire system. Previously, we couldn’t do that. We had to run two or more reports to trace the changes made to the system.”

Another example is Madrona’s use of Aptean Food & Beverage ERP’s expiration date management functionality. Before implementing Aptean’s solution, Madrona had no clear insight into expiration date and shelf life tracking, which turned out to be a big issue for proper inventory management and KPI tracking. During the shipping process, each sales order had to have the ship date and the expiration date reviewed to ensure that the correct shelf life requirements were met for the customer.

Now, because that data lives in one system and is accessible to all departments, Madrona’s finance team has better visibility into the direct impact of manufacturing and KPI variances. The company’s warehouse team is also able to utilize the ERP system to manage expiry dates using the FEFO method on all orders directly through controls set up during customer creation.

“Aptean has helped us solve a number of data issues and has ultimately helped us move forward as an organization,” says Perrott.



Streamlining Processes for Greater Efficiency

In addition to consolidating its operational data into one platform, Madrona was able to utilize Aptean Food & Beverage ERP to optimize many of its operational processes.

With the use of Aptean's Plant module, Madrona has improved its production scheduling and increased its consumption accuracy. The introduction of mobile handhelds on the production floor allows workers to see schedules in real time, record against the schedule, report on consumption and ensure better input accuracy and efficiency.

In terms of its warehousing processes, Madrona has utilized Aptean's Floor module, a device-based warehouse management feature, to receive inventory into its warehouse and directly into the system in real time, eliminating input errors and data inaccuracies. Perrott and his team are also able to separate out customer pickups from late-shipment reports (since the company accounts for pickups and shipments differently), ensuring a more accurate view into its warehouse lifecycle.

"It's simply better with Aptean," Perrott says of the improvements in Madrona's lot code integrity. Unlike Madrona's previous manufacturing system, Aptean Food & Beverage ERP automatically provides each item a lot code and tracks that code throughout the entire production process. "In our previous system, we had to hand-type all of these things," says Perrott. "Whenever you key something in manually after the fact, there's always a higher risk for error."



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Better Data Means Better Decision Making

Perrott attributes Madrona's success with Aptean to the team's commitment to removing all legacy data from its operations. "I've been using ERP systems for over 20 years, and what sets us apart is that we've gotten rid of the legacy stuff. I know a lot of other businesses struggle because they continue to rely on their legacy software. That is the key point: It's important to commit fully to the Aptean system."

With all the company's data in Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, the team at Madrona can easily pull reports to evaluate the breakdown of sales by dimensions, which is extremely helpful to Madrona's finance team. They can look at costs and balance sheets with actual manufacturing output numbers to get real insight into variances. These comparisons are crucial for Madrona's standard costing practices.

"Our previous system didn't do these things very well," says Perrott. "Being able to look at our data in one location and know that it is accurate allows us to determine if we are on track with our costs, expenses and profitability, helping us make better decisions."

Since going live with Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *JustFood Edition*, Madrona has significantly increased visibility into its operations and streamlined its warehousing, manufacturing and sales processes.



Are You Ready to **Learn More?**

Interested to see how Aptean Food & Beverage ERP can help you better manage your food company?

Contact us at **info@aptean.com** or visit **www.aptean.com**.

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