

# Creminelli Fine Meats

Leverages Aptean Food  
& Beverage ERP for  
Business Growth



## Industry

Food & Beverage

## Challenges

- » Home-grown solutions unable to scale with their growth
- » Stringent regulatory requirements

## Benefits

- » Streamlined production processes with real-time data
- » Faster speed and greater accuracy throughout compliance processes
- » Reduced error by eliminating manual entry

## Artisan Charcuterie

For Cristiano Creminelli, pinpointing his family's entry into salami processing and manufacturing is impossible, because it began before the advent of written records. When Christiano's grandfather opened the family's first salami factory in the Piedmont region of Italy in 1907, he was using salami-making recipes and techniques that he learned from his grandfather. Cristiano was raised in an environment that taught him a passion and appreciation for salami, and there was no doubt he would continue his family's timeless tradition. He became involved in the industry and worked as a supplier during the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin. There, he and future partners Chris Bowler and Jared Lynch talked about the dream of bringing artisan Italian salami to the United States, and the following year, Creminelli Fine Meats was born in Salt Lake City.

The company literally started from nothing, with Cristiano and Jared having to sell their cars to help pay for the initial processing equipment. But their perseverance and dedication to quality quickly caught people's attention. Following a great showing at the Fancy Food Show in San Diego in 2007, the organization was approached by Whole Foods with the opportunity to become a supplier. Bit by bit, the company assembled the necessary infrastructure and has grown into a world-class operation. What started as the dream of three partners has become an organization of 70 people. In addition to Whole Foods, items from Creminelli's four different product lines can be found on the shelves of retailers such as Starbucks, Target, and Kroger.



“If you really make a salami well and you eat good food, you can have a great experience with it, and that’s what we aim to do here.”

**Jared Lynch**, Chief Development Officer Creminelli  
Fine Meats

## The Challenges of Growth


The secret ingredient to Creminelli’s award-winning products is time; the only way to produce the highest-quality meats is through proper aging. When it came to the company’s expansion, however, Cristiano and his team did not have the luxury of time. Growth came quickly, and it became apparent that they would need modern tools to manage the business. The company’s home-grown inventory management and sales software programs had been adequate when the business was getting started, but they were unable to keep up with Creminelli’s growth. Creminelli’s particular area of focus intensified the problem, as meat processors face especially stringent regulatory requirements from government organizations and partners. These requirements enforce the highest standards of record-keeping and food traceability.

Creminelli decided that a modern enterprise resource planning (ERP) application would allow them to merge the various segments of the business onto a single platform. “[Our goal] was to bring all of our financial reporting together, along with our manufacturing and quality teams, ensuring that our products start to finish had traceability and that we had a way to manage that,” says Jared.

They engaged a local consulting firm, Enterprise Solutions, to assist them in the search for a new system. Enterprise Solutions has extensive experience deploying Microsoft’s Dynamics NAV (now branded “Business Central”) ERP software, and recommended this solution to Creminelli. Dynamics is a highly flexible application that allows for customizations, but as Enterprise Solutions looked at Creminelli’s needs, it became clear that the level of enhancement that Creminelli would need to properly replicate its business processes would be extensive. To reduce the time and expense of developing such a heavily customized system, it would be

necessary to select a vertical add-on with a focus on the food industry. By implementing a solution designed for food processors and manufacturers, much of the functionality Creminelli needed would be available out-of-the-box.

Enterprise Solutions didn't have to look far to find the perfect food vertical. The company had an existing relationship with Aptean, a software and services organization with deep experience in the industry. Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *bcFood Edition's* add-on to Dynamics is the product of more than 30 years of implementing software with food processors, manufacturers, and distributors. They asked Aptean to present their solution, and Creminelli immediately liked what they saw.



“We had implemented various Aptean solutions in the past, and we knew that they had a vertical that would work well in the food industry. So we reached out to them to take a look at their package.”

**Bob Smart**, Owner Enterprise Solutions

## The Implementation Process: Phasing in Functionality

Creminelli selected Aptean Food & Beverage ERP and Microsoft Dynamics as their ERP system, and the process of implementing the application began. The benefits of a vertical solution with pre-existing functionality for the food industry became immediately apparent when Creminelli laid out a six to seven-month implementation schedule. As Bob Smart, owner of Enterprise Solutions, explains, “Typically, our timeline for an ERP project of this magnitude is eight to 12 months. If we had to customize the solution, it would have stretched out 15, 16 months. But because we had a vertical solution, we were able to meet their compressed timeline, and we actually got them implemented within eight months.”


One way in which this accelerated timeframe was achieved was by scaling down the implementation into smaller segments, or phases. Rather than attempt to have the entire system up and running on Day One, the implementation team identified the most critical business functionality and designated this as necessary for Phase One. This phased implementation approach is typically recommended by Aptean and Enterprise Solutions, as it allows companies get up and running on their new solution sooner, rather than later. As users see the improvements their new ERP system brings to business tasks, there is more excitement and motivation to implement additional features, maintaining momentum into the next phase of implementation.

After taking a few months for users to get acclimated to their new system, Phase Two commenced. This introduced additional features such as quality control, production management, and mobile warehousing to Creminelli's environment. The mobile warehousing solution was especially important, as it allowed users to track the movement of intermediate product as it moved from production to the drying and then aging areas of the facility. Prior to the introduction of Aptean's mobile solution, employees had to manually track this information via spreadsheets. Bringing mobility to the warehouse and tracking the location of each lot of product significantly streamlined Creminelli's processes.

## Features Designed for Data Capture and Management

The transition to a mobile environment is a benefit echoed by many members of the Creminelli team. "We just scan the cart," says Andrew Bushnell, ERP Analyst at Creminelli. "The data is entered accurately into NAV, and now we're able to track where carts are on a real-time basis, and we are able to analyze the data to figure out if we are aging carts properly."

Creminelli has also gotten a lot of use out of Aptean Food & Beverage ERP's advanced style sheet features. Using the style sheet module, users can design templates in Microsoft Word that are configured to extract data and values from their ERP system. Creminelli uses style sheets extensively, creating production reports to guide users to each day's scheduled production, cart tags with barcodes that identify a cart's contents, and bills of lading that receiving personnel can affix to product as it enters the inventory.



"When we first went live, it took a little while for everybody to get used to the system. Once we did get going with that, people realized that it was saving them time. The extra effort that they were putting in was helping the company."

**Andrew Bushnell**, ERP Analyst Creminelli Fine Meats



Closely tied to the use of style sheets is Aptean Food & Beverage ERP's document management functionality. Document management makes it possible to attach any type of file to records and documents within Dynamics. The style sheets that are generated from the program, along with external documents that are scanned and converted into an electronic format, can be attached to the related production, shipping, and receiving records in Aptean Food & Beverage ERP. As Andrew explains, "it comes in very handy in an audit-type situation where you need to get a document. It's always a couple clicks away."



**"[Aptean] was super helpful because they were able to design the program around our needs. For us, Aptean Food & Beverage ERP was a ginormous improvement because it made our life a lot easier."**

**Chrstiano Creminelli**, Master Artisan Creminelli Fine Meats

Brooke Vincent-Lewis, Financial Analyst at Creminelli, agrees. "We can attach PDFs in the system, Word documents in the system, and there's a lot more controls that we can set up to make sure that what is going into the system is clean data and what we extract isn't garbage."

## **Staying Compliant: Quick Access to Information and Complete Traceability**

As a meat manufacturer, Creminelli is required to perform vigorous quality testing on its products. This is not only to maintain compliance with regulatory agencies, but also to ensure that the product meets Creminelli's own high standards of excellence. In addition to critical control points such as water activity and pH balance, every lot is tested and rated for color, texture, appearance, and sliceability. With Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, this data can all be entered directly into the system against the relevant lot record. For Creminelli's Quality Assurance Manager Daniele Versaci, this has been a significant timesaver: "It allows us to condense all this information, combine all this information, and present it to the USDA inspector, or anybody that is wondering about the safety of the product."



The lot traceability features within Dynamics and Aptean Food & Beverage ERP are also invaluable when Creminelli is tasked with performing a mock recall. Users can drill into a specific production order and track the entire history of that order, from the spices and raw materials that are used all the way through to the finished product. According to Andrew, the speed and accuracy with which this information can be obtained has not failed to impress the people administering these tests: “We work with suppliers that require a two-hour recall, and with our Aptean Food & Beverage ERP tools, we are usually able to meet these requirements in 90 minutes. I have personally had several auditors mention how fast we are able to do this and how great it is to have all the documentation available within a few clicks.”

Throughout all aspects of working with Aptean, Creminelli’s users have found working with a system that shares the same look and feel to standard Microsoft Office products such as Outlook, Word, and Excel adds a level of familiarity and comfort. “When you see the screens and everything, a lot of times they can be overwhelming,” says Jared. “User input is paramount in the ERP system because we need it to be accurate and we need it to be user-friendly enough where people can do their jobs...we liked [Aptean] in particular because it was very similar to some other Microsoft products and things like that that were recognizable by our user group here.”

## An ERP Solution for Tomorrow

One of the most important factors for Creminelli when they were selecting an ERP solution was that their application have the flexibility for growth over time. Following the initial software deployment, Creminelli has continued to add features to their system. “We’ve added a lot more functionality around reporting when it comes to finances, customer management, inventory management, transportation management, as well as the basics of the food safety protocol that we have and of course all the quality measures as well that we’re measuring and keeping track of,” says Jared.

Creminelli has already deployed Aptean Food & Beverage ERP’s EDI extension to automate customer transactions, but there is a drive to do more. As Andrew explains, “The more customers we can get on that platform saves a ton of order entry time as well as increases order entry accuracy. We are also implementing a lot more with the vendor side EDI so we can place orders, saving time for our purchasing people so they can actually be doing their job instead of sending orders via e-mail.”



“Today, after the introduction of Aptean, all the tasks that I accomplish daily, weekly, or monthly are made so much easier, faster, and more accurate.”

**Daniele Versaci**, Quality Assurance Manager  
Creminelli Fine Meats

Seeing how the ability to process transactions electronically using features such as EDI has streamlined many operations, Creminelli is eager to take advantage of other opportunities. The company is in the process of transitioning their banking transactions to the electronic payment tools within Dynamics. In the past, the manual upload of payment templates to their bank left the door open for discrepancies and errors. By automatically uploading payments to the bank directly from Dynamics, the opportunity for errors is eliminated. This will also allow vendor payments to occur instantaneously, rather than require a physical check to be mailed and processed.

While the features and functionality may change, the overall Apteian Food & Beverage ERP system will remain a central part of Creminelli's operations for a long time to come. "The ERP system is the backbone," summarizes Andrew, "so we want to make sure everything we do is tied to that ERP system. Whether it's printing lot tags, printing forms, shipping documents, product labels, everything is tied to the system, so it takes out the human element. We don't have anybody entering values. We know that lots are correct. We know that everything going out of the building is correct because it's in the system."



## Are You Ready to Learn More?

Interested to see how Apteian can help you better manage your food company?

Contact us at [info@aptean.com](mailto:info@aptean.com) or visit [www.aptean.com](http://www.aptean.com).



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