Aptean Food & Beverage ERP
JustFood Edition

How Creative Foods broke down data silos to improve traceability and visibility



Industry
Food & Beverage

Challenges

- Every part of the organization operating within its own department, limited sharing of information
- Inventory and traceability issues

Benefits

- A user-friendly system
- Functionality for both accounting and product integration
- Access to real-time inventory data

Data Silos

As Executive Director of Supply Chain at Creative Foods, Rodney Smith had one goal in mind when selecting an updated ERP system: departmental transparency. Prior to Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *JustFood Edition*, Smith says, “We worked in silos. Everyone worked within their own department, and there was limited sharing of information with the rest of the company.”

This lack of transparency resulted in a complete disconnect between the company’s finance and production departments and ultimately led to inventory and traceability issues. “We were using an inferior and outdated accounting system before switching to an ERP,” says Smith. “There was limited bill of material functionality and not a lot of structure there. We were putting data into the system 24 hours later, so we had an issue with real-time inventory. Our procurement team was waiting almost a full day before even knowing what was used.”

In terms of traceability, “The team was relying on disparate departmental data to track product throughout the warehouse. It would take up to four hours to complete a basic traceability exercise,” a time he was hoping to improve on with the help of a new system.



> "With Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, everyone now has access to data. There's transparency now from R&D when a project starts, all the way until its actual implementation of finished goods. That's been huge for us."
>
> **Rodney Smith**, Senior Director of Supply Chain, Creative Food Ingredients

One unified system connecting departments, data and processes

Smith has been with Creative Foods for 28 years, so he's seen various ERP systems come and go. "One of the reasons we were looking to upgrade was because we required a system that was more user-friendly," he says. The system Creative Foods was using prior to Aptean Food & Beverage ERP was built on a character-based, green-screen program and was used strictly for data entry. "It was definitely a big upgrade for us when we switched to Aptean."

The other deciding factor for Creative Foods was Aptean Food & Beverage ERP's functionality for both accounting and production integration. "Most ERP systems are weighted more favorably to accounting or to production," he says. "The balance between the two was a big thing for us." For Creative Food's procurement team, the benefits were huge. "We were now able to react quickly to shortages and also to where inventory was used incorrectly. We also have access to real-time inventory data, so if a customer calls and needs an order, we know if we have that inventory and whether we can ship it to them." Creative Foods also uses Aptean's Plant, Floor, WMS and MES add-ons, to aid in this real-time visibility of production processes. "We have electronic tablets on the production floor, we capture consumption at the mixers, we do output as finished goods come off the lines. It takes everything to the next level."

With the help of Aptean, the Creative Foods team has also been able to break down data silos to create more fluid workflows across the entire organization. “With Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, everyone has access to this data. There’s transparency now from R&D when a project starts, all the way until its actual implementation of finished goods. Those have been huge changes for us.”

And those traceability exercises that took four hours to complete? “Currently it takes us about 30 minutes,” he says. With the click of a button within the Aptean system, the information Creative Foods requires is pulled into a report within a matter of seconds. “And that data can be tracked from finished lot back or from raw material forward,” Smith says.

The Results

Since going live on Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *JustFood Edition*, Creative Foods has been able to:

- Gain real-time visibility into inventory data, allowing the company to decrease inventory shortages and increase order efficiency.
- Break down data silos for full transparency between departments.
- Greatly improve the time it takes to perform traceability exercises (from four hours to 30 minutes).



Advice to Prospective Buyers

Smith advises to be realistic when it comes to planning for an ERP project. “Know what you want to do but then understand that you’re going to have to scale back to get started. Once you’re up and running, you can start phasing in other features and modules.”

For Smith, production and finance functionality were most important, so he and his team focused on getting that part right. “Once we got those pieces into the system, we could add on to the rest of it. It makes it much easier once you’re already familiar with the system, because you have that understanding and confidence in how things work and where everything flows.”



Are You Ready to **Learn More?**

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

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