Madrona Specialty Foods

Streamlines Processes and Increases Visibility with JustFood ERP

CASE STUDY

Customer Details

Madrona Specialty Foods, headquartered in Seattle, Washington, produces a variety of artisanal cookies and crackers.

Industry

Food & Beverage

Aptean Solution

JustFood

Challenges

- Disparate systems led to manual work and no single source of information
- No real-time visibility into operations
- Lack of critical functionality created workarounds

Benefits

- Up and running on the system in six months with minimal impact on operations
- Departmental transparency and connectivity
- One integrated platform for finance, warehouse, sales and manufacturing

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 JustFood ERP to streamline its operational processes and gain better insight into its sales, finance, and warehousing data.

Disparate Systems and A Lack of Visibility

Before choosing JustFood, Madrona was using separate accounting and manufacturing systems to run its business. These tools operated independently of each other and meant 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.

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.

Since going live on JustFood, Madrona has significantly increased visibility into its operations and streamlined its warehousing, manufacturing, and sales processes.

A Single Source of Information

After choosing JustFood 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 JustFood's finance, quality, warehouse, sales, and manufacturing features first.

"Because of the platform JustFood 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 JustFood 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."

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> Supply Chain Director, Madrona

Another example is Madrona's use of JustFood's expiration date management functionality. Before JustFood, 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 JustFood to manage expiry dates using the first expired first out (FEFO) method on all orders directly through controls set up during customer creation. "JustFood 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 JustFood to optimize many of its operational processes.

With the use of JustFood Plant, JustFood's manufacturing execution system (MES), 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 JustFood Floor, JustFood's device-based warehouse management (WMS) 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 JustFood," Perrott says of the improvements in Madrona's lot code integrity. Unlike Madrona's previous manufacturing system, JustFood 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."

Better Data Means Better Decision Making

Perrott attributes Madrona's success with JustFood 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 JustFood system."

With all the company's data in JustFood, 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."

Interested in learning how JustFood can help you? Contact us at **info@aptean.com**.

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