

# Adams Group

Adams Group takes advantage of newer technologies by migrating to a state-of-the-art platform



## Industry

Food & Beverage

## Challenges

- » Adams Group's in-house solution was unable to keep up with the company's growth
- » Disconnected activities because of disconnected components in their in-house solution

## Benefits

- » Running the business on a modern, unified platform
- » All important business processes accommodated in the software
- » More trustworthy data, and quicker access to that data

## A History of Innovation

The ability to adapt to change and meet challenges head-on is embedded deep within the DNA of the Adams Group. The company's presence in California can be traced back to the days of the Gold Rush, when a younger son from a large family in Missouri traveled west in search of his fortune. While he didn't strike it rich in terms of prospecting, he did acquire a sizable amount of land in the northern part of the state. Realizing that a future in gold was uncertain, he looked to agriculture, mortgaging his land to the bank in order to pay for the irrigation that would allow him to plant and maintain orchards. When he suddenly passed away, the bank seized all the land, and the family moved to the Sacramento valley, fully committed to pursuing agriculture.

Adams Grain was officially formed by David Adams, Sr., during the 1920s as a grower and exporter of malted barley to Great Britain, launching a heritage in specialty grains that over time evolved to include oil production – in the 1990s, the Adams Vegetable Oils company was the first organization in the United States to offer organic oils. Today, both Adams Grain and Adams Vegetable Oils are part of the larger Adams Group, which also includes Adams Trucking, Adams Seed, and Adams Australia.

With David's great-grandson Wayne currently helming the organization, Adams Group is enjoying its fourth generation of family ownership. The company continues to innovate and remain on the cutting edge of industry and technology.



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**Wayne Adams**, Managing Director at Adams Group



## In Search of a Modern Solution

This focus on innovation extended to the software system that Adams needed to run all facets of its business. Adams was using a home-grown system that had been built over the years, and while this in-house solution initially met their needs, it was unable to keep up with the company's growth. The management team at Adams began the process of finding a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) application. In selecting a new solution, Adams wanted to find something that would allow them to run their business on a more modern, unified platform, and give them opportunities that their current software could not provide.

As part of their decision-making process, Adams looked at 20 different software vendors. The management team eliminated a number of options that were either outdated or could not accommodate the particular needs of a food organization. “We needed something that was the right size for our company,” says Lee Smith, General Manager of Adams Vegetable Oil. “There were solutions out there that we felt were too big and too complicated. There were solutions that maybe fit the ag side a little bit better, but were old and less developed.”

One company whose program stood out to the management team was Aptean, with its Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *bcFood Edition* solution built atop Microsoft's Dynamics NAV ERP product. Adams found that NAV was the perfect size for their company, and identified Aptean Food & Beverage ERP as a platform that was built for the future, meaning that they would have reliable software for many years. In looking at Aptean Food & Beverage ERP's order management, production control, cost control, and lot tracking capabilities, they saw areas that their current software was either not adequately addressing, or missing altogether. Adams was equally impressed with the food industry knowledge and experience displayed by the Aptean team.

“We met some [other candidates], and they looked like sharp people, but they didn’t look like they knew who we were,” says Wayne Adams. “The Apteian folks had a lot of great energy and they really knew our industry well, which made this transition and implementation a lot easier.”

Satisfied that they’d found a company that understood the complexities of their business and whose solution would be a good fit now and in the future, Adams selected Apteian as their software provider.

## The Implementation Process: Empowering the Users

The implementation of Apteian Food & Beverage ERP at Adams required replacing the disconnected components of their in-house system, which would take careful coordination and planning. In this regard, Apteian’s experience was a critical asset. As Wayne explains it, “We had a lot of fragmented, customized systems to replace, so Apteian came in with good project management skills. They really helped out determining the timeline and setting milestones. We could tell there was a good experience in that area.”



“We really liked the energy of the Apteian folks. They came right in talking about different food regulations that were coming up and that really opened our eyes.”

**Wayne Adams**, Managing Director, Adams Group


As the first true ERP solution that Adams had ever used, the implementation of Apteian Food & Beverage ERP at Adams brought with it a significant learning curve for many employees. In this area, NAV’s shared interface with Microsoft products like Outlook, Word, and Excel gave users a familiar, straightforward look and feel, providing an immediate level of comfort.

Very early on in the implementation process, Apteian stressed to Adams the importance of “owning” their system, meaning that users would be taught to become self-sufficient. Rather than simply walk everyone through a list of steps needed to perform a task with no explanation, Apteian ensured that each individual understood the impact of every activity from a larger perspective.

This commitment to self-sufficiency paid off. When Adams Vegetable Oils was the first company to go live with Apteian Food & Beverage ERP in September of 2017, the company relied upon Apteian’s assistance to ensure a smooth transition; when Apteian Food & Beverage ERP was rolled out to Adams Grain eight months later, Adams’s personnel were able to perform almost all of the go-live tasks themselves, resulting in much lower support costs from Apteian.


## Extensive Features, Unlimited Flexibility

A key deciding factor for Adams in selecting Aptean Food & Beverage ERP as their ERP solution was how so many of their business processes were accommodated for in the software. Aptean Food & Beverage ERP's commodity receiving features, for example, would allow Adams to process bulk receipts of grain from their growers. Adams was also impressed with how Aptean Food & Beverage ERP allows for the setup of customer specifications. Much of the processing activities that take place at Adams involve the outputting and blending of product according to customer-specific requirements that call for varying percentages of different grain types. This setup is available out-of-the-box in Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, making it possible for users to not only know what type of blend is needed in a certain production scenario, but also see which lots of on-hand product can satisfy these requirements.



“We needed better detail and costing. Costing was a big weak point for us. We were waiting sometimes 45 days to get financials back after a month. We were really interested in getting that information a lot quicker and a lot more accurately.”

**Lee Smith**, General Manager at Adams Vegetable Group



At the outset of the Adams implementation, the Aptean team performed a comprehensive needs analysis to identify areas that would require enhancement. The native flexibility of Dynamics NAV and Aptean Food & Beverage ERP make it very simple to incorporate changes that accurately reflect the way a company wishes to do business. For Adams, a major undertaking was the development a scale interface that would capture the scale-in and scale-out weights of trucks bringing product into and out of their locations, then transmit this data directly to NAV. Aptean developed a solution that has been nationally certified and meets regulatory requirements in all 50 states.



“Having the data in the system, real-time, has been just key for the field guys, for the accounting team, for customer service, for the grower accounting staff. They can see the data real-time, and that’s been a vast difference between what they were used to previously.”

Julie Bates, ERP Manager at Adams Group

## Cohesion and Communication: The Power of Real-Time Data

Going live on Apteon Food & Beverage ERP allowed Adams to achieve its goal of shedding multiple software systems in favor of a single, unified application. Activities that were formerly disconnected from one another are now executed within the same environment and shared across the entire organization. This has led to greater consistencies in business processes, more trustworthy data, and quicker access to that data. “The user experience has been positive,” says Lee. “They like the system, they like the environment that they’re working in. The data they can get out so far has been good. They like the access to information that they’re getting.”

Adams has also enjoyed the ability to do more with their software than their previous system allowed. For the first time, the company has access to manufacturing functionality, and the business is already seeing the benefits. While manufacturing results were previously unavailable until close to 15 days after month-end processes, today Adams performs weekly production reviews and obtains much greater insight into yields and losses, allowing for more immediate improvements to efficiencies and margins.

By migrating to a state-of-the-art platform, Adams has taken advantage of newer technologies, improving the most critical component of their customer and vendor relationships: communication. As Julie Bates, ERP Manager at Adams, describes, “Our field staff are using iPads with NAV. When they’re out in the field, they can look up a grower’s loads that have come in, look at the quality data, and tell [the grower] what the results are. And that gives the grower an idea of how their loads are doing, what kind of money they’re going to get paid. It allows them to make decisions while they’re out instead of having to come back to the office.”

## The Best is Yet to Come

For Wayne, having a system that provides real-time data is only the first step to gaining complete control over his business. “Now that we have all this data and all these transactions to look at, we need to start building the reports to analyze that. That’s something that I think we’re all really excited about,” he explains.

Having seen the benefits of a modern ERP system, Adams has plans to introduce additional technologies to their solution. The company’s plant level automation system will be integrated with NAV, allowing employees to perform their duties more quickly than ever. Another major undertaking is the deployment of a new grower portal that will grant their growers secure access to load information, quality data, and the status of payments.

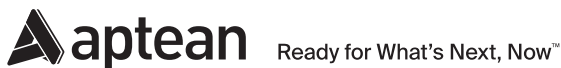
While these improvements are some of the more notable projects on the horizon, the reality is that there is no limit on what Adams wants to do. No longer hampered by the limitations of an old, patchwork web of programs, the Adams Group is free to expand their business secure in the knowledge that their software will grow right alongside them. As Lee sums it up, “We feel like we’re still just scratching the surface of what NAV’s capabilities are and what we can do as far as efficiency improvements in the future.”



## Are You Ready to Learn More?

Interested to see how Aptean 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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