

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Northwest Naturals boosts inventory accuracy

Northwest Naturals, LLC is in the juice business. A wholly owned subsidiary of Tree Top, Inc., the company is a leading supplier of fruit juice concentrates and essences, providing both domestic and international manufacturers with products of consistently fresh flavor and high quality. When Northwest Naturals sought to replace its assortment of outdated and underpowered software applications with an integrated business management solution, it carefully surveyed the marketplace before selecting Sage X3, for the solution's industry-specific functionality, its ease of use, and its competitive price point.

The best combination of functionality and price

"We looked at offerings from SAP and Lawson, among others," recalls Twyla DelPozzi, finance administration manager for Northwest Naturals. "We felt they were too costly and too complex for our needs. Sage X3 represented the best combination of functionality and price for a process manufacturer like us."

Company

Northwest Naturals, LLC

Location

Bothell, Washington

Employees

32

Industry

Food manufacturing

System

Sage X3

The Challenge

- Multiple, disconnected software applications
- Duplicate data entry
- Inefficient production planning

The Results

- Duplicate data entry has been eliminated
- Production planning and inventory accuracy have improved
- Full forward and backward lot traceability has been accomplished
- Quality control processes are more easily executed
- Manual data entry has been minimized, eliminating a frequent source of errors

Courtney Doolin-Lusk, food safety manager for Northwest Naturals, says the company had a list of must-have functionality in any new application. “We needed robust process manufacturing capabilities of course—including comprehensive lot tracking—but we also wanted better tools for inventory management, purchasing, and order processing. Sage X3 addresses each of those areas very well.”

Integrated solution improves accuracy

The company made the switch to Sage X3 nearly eight years ago, and the benefits were both immediate and continuing.

“Previously, we were doing a lot of duplicate data entry,” recalls DelPozzi. “Sales orders, accounting data, recipe information, batch data, and lot details were all kept in separate applications. In addition to the extra effort involved in maintaining all those databases, there was an increased opportunity for errors. By incorporating all our business data in Sage X3, we’ve grown our efficiency and greatly increased the accuracy of our data.”

Inventory accuracy has also improved. “Before, we ended up with many adjustments during our routing physical counts,” says DelPozzi. “With Sage X3, we are able to manage our inventory much more tightly. All transactions affecting inventory are in one system, and as a result we’ve seen a big boost in our overall accuracy.”

Efficient production planning

The Material Requirements Planning (MRP) capabilities of Sage X3 help to drive efficiency in the production cycle. “As work orders are created, the system will automatically trigger a transfer to bring needed stock in from another location, or will generate a purchase order if we are out of stock,” explains Doolin-Lusk. “It saves us from manually reviewing each work order, and keeps the production process moving quickly.” Northwest Naturals’ buyers and planners make extensive use of the Product Planning Workbench tool in the software to provide them with a view of the projected stock by product and by site over a given period of time. “It helps them proactively initiate transfers between our sites to better ensure we’ve got the right ingredients at the right location when we need them,” explains DelPozzi.

Consistent high quality

Producing products of consistent high quality is of paramount importance to Northwest Naturals. To that end, each completed batch must first pass through quality control where it is tested and the results recorded in Sage X3. Batches that do not meet the demanding standards are ineligible to be sold. The quality control processes in Sage X3 are highly configurable, flexible, and easy to use, enabling Northwest Naturals to fit them to its unique business model.

“We are progressing rapidly toward that goal (of certification by the Safe Quality Food Program) and it simply wouldn’t be possible without a tool like Sage X3 to help us.”

- Courtney Doolin-Lusk, Food Safety Manager, Northwest Naturals

For approved lots, certificates of analysis are easily generated and can be provided to customers along with each shipment. The company is now able to do a complete lot trace, from original purchase of raw ingredients through the final sale of a finished product, in just a few hours. “It would have taken days for us to gather that information before,” says Doolin-Lusk. “If we’re ever faced with a recall situation, we are prepared to respond.”

Meet rigorous food safety standards

The company has a goal to become certified by the Safe Quality Food (SQF) Program, a rigorous set of international food-safety management standards. “We are progressing rapidly toward that goal,” concludes Doolin-Lusk. “And it simply wouldn’t be possible without a tool like Sage X3 to help us.”



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