

Trans-Ocean Products: “We Seafood Your Way” With Sage PFW

Something fishy is going on in Bellingham, Washington—and it’s a whopper of a business story. Bellingham is home to Trans-Ocean Products, one of the country’s largest processors of surimi seafood (also known as imitation crab). Trans-Ocean’s Crab Classic products are sold throughout North America in grocery stores and to commercial customers such as restaurants and salad makers.

The company sells products under its own brand name, and also produces private-label products for customers. Its latest innovations include frozen sushi and Jaiba Supremo, a surimi product developed for America’s growing Latino population.

From Three to 300 Customers Overnight

Under its original business model, Trans-Ocean relied on a broker for distributing its products. Life was simpler back then, with straightforward transactions and a short customer list. A proprietary production accounting system handled everything with ease.

Then, in 1997, Trans-Ocean purchased the customer list from its broker and created its own sales force. Sales volume exploded overnight and revenues doubled in just five years.

“The complexity of transactions we needed to handle was suddenly staggering,” says Allen Leaf, Trans-Ocean’s controller. “Instead of one order from a broker that distributed to 20 customers, we now had 20 customers coming directly to us, each with specific requirements. We needed a sophisticated system, coordinating everything from recipe formulation and order processing to detailed business reports.”

Customer

Trans-Ocean Products, Inc.

Industry

Manufacturing—Food

Location

Bellingham, Washington

Number of Locations

Two

Number of Employees

300

System

Sage PFW

Modules in Operation

Accounts Payable
Accounts Receivable
Bank Book
Costing
Formulas
General Ledger
Inventory Pro
Material Requirements Planning
Multi-Currency Manager
Order Entry Pro
Production
Purchasing Pro

Challenge

Find an end-to-end system to handle all aspects of food processing and business management tools, given sudden increase in customer base and need to enhance efficiencies.

Solution

Sage PFW with Order Entry Pro, Production, Formulas, and Inventory Pro modules, providing companywide access to all system information.

Results

A sophisticated, seamless system managing everything from recipe formulation to Web-based sales reports, contributing to tighter production controls, streamlined order entry processes, and enhanced profitability.

Sage PFW to the Rescue

For a while, Trans-Ocean limped along with separate databases for inventory, sales, and orders. Then Leaf discovered the Sage PFW ERP system, a comprehensive process manufacturing and business management solution. “Most of the software we looked at was designed for discrete production, like making an airplane wing,” he says.

“But food processors like us often have complicated blended formulas with layers of subformulas. A discrete model just doesn’t work. Sage PFW was the one package that let us integrate subrecipes into one master formula, perform costing and planning, track inventory, and prepare management reports—all in one seamless application.”

Prior to implementing Sage PFW, Leaf’s team had to enter orders as many as three times into different databases. Now data is automatically transmitted among the system’s modules, saving time and cutting down on errors.

“One of the best things about Sage PFW is the way everybody in the company has access to the same information,” Leaf explains. “From production to finance, it has taken away the disparities we had before and puts us all on the same page. Not only does this improve process flow, but it also helps us in accounting to identify discrepancies and streamline month-end closing procedures.”

Trans-Ocean was so pleased with Sage PFW that it switched the accounting and business management modules to provide an enterprisewide exchange of information. “You can’t beat Sage PFW for convenience, accuracy, and user-friendliness,” Leaf notes. “And if I ever need technical support, I can call one place now and get an answer fast.”

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Because Sage PFW is designed with open database architecture, Trans-Ocean can use third-party products or create ad-hoc reports with Crystal Reports® and Microsoft® Access®. Leaf says, “This key feature enabled us to design a system of Web-based reports for our salespeople. They can look up a customer’s order history, create a summary of sales for a broker, and even conduct profitability analysis, all in real-time fashion.

“Sage PFW has been a key component in managing our growth,” Leaf says. “Our expansion would have been extremely painful, if not impossible, without such a comprehensive process manufacturing and business solution.”

About Sage North America

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