

Shaw's Foods: Sage PFW Much More Than a Fish Tale

Mama Shaw knows seafood. With her husband John, she founded Florida's first crabmeat processing plant in 1934. Still chipper today at 90, she remains at the helm of Shaw's Southern Belle Frozen Foods, the nation's only company specializing in premium-quality, customized crab, lobster, and snapper stuffings.

Shaw's seafood mixtures are sold primarily to restaurants and institutions. American servicemen dine on them overseas. Some products are now available through major retailers like Sam's Club and BJ's. Not only are Shaw's mixtures perfect for crab cakes and gourmet fillings, but they also provide additional value for cooks looking to stretch portions of increasingly costly seafood dishes.

Old System, a False Lure

Shaw's existing accounting package had definitely been a false lure. The standalone product was incompatible with any of the company's manufacturing systems, could not calculate income and losses on individual products and would not even export data to a spreadsheet.

Joanne Zimmerman, Shaw's controller, went to seminars and product demos to learn about more advanced alternatives. "We needed something that would give us better insight into opportunities for enhanced profitability and efficiencies," she says. "We wanted a new system to manage everything in both operations and administration, allowing us to stay on top of inventory requirements, calculate the profitability of our recipes, and streamline production. Plus it had to be user-friendly enough that we could run it ourselves without hiring an MIS person."

Customer

Shaw's Southern Belle Frozen Foods, Inc.

Industry

Manufacturing—Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging

Location

Jacksonville, Florida

Number of Locations

One

Number of Employees

130+

System

Sage PFW

Modules in Operation

Accounts Payable
Accounts Receivable
Bank Book
Crystal Reports®
Formulas
General Ledger
Inventory Pro
Order Entry Pro
Production
Purchasing Pro

Challenge

Replace old, inadequate system with an advanced, fully integrated, user-friendly manufacturing and financial solution that will help maximize efficiency and profitability.

Solution

Sage PFW ERP financial and process manufacturing modules including Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and General Ledger.

Results

Streamlined integration from A to Z; detailed product analysis; cut losses in mixes; recaptured costs; accurate inventory; no more costly production halts or emergency shipments; ten-minute product costing.

Faster, Easier, and More Precise

After a false start, Zimmerman selected Sage PFW ERP, a fully integrated process manufacturing and financial solution. She calls it “one of the best decisions I ever made.”

Sage PFW provides detailed information on Shaw's daily production—what it's making, what materials it has, and what it's costing. It helps Zimmerman identify which product lines are most profitable for future promotional efforts, and others that may need to be cut back or studied. She has been able to use the system to make decisions about reformulating specific products, or recommend making them on a different machine.

“The new system has helped us cut losses in our mixes,” says Zimmerman. “Nothing comes out of a machine until the tube is full. At the end of a production day, significant amounts of mix might still be in the machine. Now we can identify those amounts and recapture costs, which had been literally going down the tubes!”

Big improvements are apparent in the purchasing department, too. Accurate inventory data allows staffers to know exactly when ingredients reach a critical level, for reordering and better scheduling. “We're saving lots of money because we no longer stop production runs or switch jobs due to missing ingredients,” Zimmerman explains. “We used to do emergency shipments all the time, air-freighting in onions from California or spices from New York. Now we practically never have to do this.”

Zimmerman is responsible for costing to develop selling prices. She uses the Sage PFW Formulas module to do the work, calculating quantities of ingredients, ensuring that percentages of total batch weights add up correctly, and determining pricing. Costing that used to take 45 minutes per product now requires only 10 minutes. Considering that Zimmerman may have 25 costing jobs on her desk at any one time, the time savings is significant.

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“A wonderful feature in Sage PFW is the ability to set up dummy companies without affecting systemwide information,” Zimmerman says. “When the ladies in the research kitchen send me a recipe, I create a temporary account. If the price doesn't come out favorably, I ask them to tweak things until we've got it right. Only then do we transfer data to the real system. It's faster, easier, and more accurate than the handwritten processes we had before.”

Additional benefits come from increased on-time shipments to customers. “Delayed shipments mean delayed revenue,” Zimmerman says. “They also hurt customer relations. In a competitive society like ours, service is key. Sage PFW has helped us be more timely and effective with both existing and potential customers—and lets us position ourselves for increased future growth.”

About Sage North America

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