



ERP implementation gets A+ progress report

Founded in 1975 and headquartered in Richfield, WI, DCI Cheese Company produces high-quality, value-added specialty cheese. DCI's business model has evolved to comprise a portfolio of major, company-owned or exclusively-managed brands, dedicated supplier partnerships and a full-service consolidation warehousing program. Some of DCI's brands include Black Diamond, Salemville, Organic Creamery, Meza, Goldy's, Joan of Arc, County Line and King's Choice.

Over the past year, DCI grew rapidly through several acquisitions. Managing these acquisitions requires a fully integrated software system capable of handling the functionality requirements of four existing legacy systems.

"We needed a software system that allowed us to effectively manage our multiple businesses," says DCI's Chief Financial Officer Tim Preuninger. "One of those acquisitions was a spin-off from a much larger food company, so time was of the essence to implement a software package that provided us the financial reporting and operational management capabilities we required."

In addition to the technical challenges involved with managing four separate entities operating on four different systems, DCI faced supply chain challenges.

"As we continue to grow, it's becoming more critical that we identify and use key information to help us quickly and accurately complete our financial reporting needs as well as achieve

Software system evolves as cheese maker expands its business.

operational excellence within our supply chain," Preuninger adds, "We also wanted a user-friendly software package that provided flexibility to allow us to tailor it to our needs."

Preuninger and his team selected Enterprise 21 ERP software from Technology Group International (TGI) due to the supplier's experience with the cheese industry. In addition to the multi-company support required by DCI, the ERP system also met several functionality requirements to manage DCI's products. From market-based pricing to lot control and reporting, the software was a strong candidate among the packages DCI reviewed. "We found Enterprise 21 offered superior production planning support and data extract capabilities. We also found it to be more user-friendly than most packages we evaluated, and technical support has been excellent."

While the implementation is not complete at all sites, Preuninger anticipates real benefits. "Once we are fully operational, we expect to achieve substantial operational efficiency improvements through better production planning, less downtime due to inefficiency and changeover, and better raw material inventory management, all of which should lower cost and improve customer service. Additionally, we expect to see our period-end closing process become more efficient, allowing us to close our financial statements faster and more accurately as well as providing our financial group more time to drive our business results."

The implementation of the ERP system is being rolled out to DCI's companies in a well-planned, controlled manner.

"Our systems conversions so far have been nearly seamless and trouble-free," says Preuninger. "We were able to convert the spin-off company within six months of acquisition, and the conversion was seamless to the customer. We are now able to get faster and more accurate access to our business data." ♦



Kevin J. McCarthy, DCI Cheese IT director, checks out TGI's Enterprise 21 ERP software, which is used to manage the complex business issues of DCI's many brands. Source: DCI Cheese Company.

For more information:
Rebecca Gill, 800-837-0028, rgill@tgilt.com.