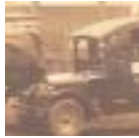


Miniat



Summary

One of the oldest family-held companies in America, Ed Miniat, Inc. produces a variety of cooked meats, edible oils, and shortening products. Miniat has achieved steady growth through a constant desire to shape their business around customer needs, with revenues exceeding \$175 million in 2001.

Situation

Like many process manufacturers, Miniat faces increasing cost pressures and customer demands. To maintain and even grow their profit margins, Miniat constantly seeks to improve the efficiency of all aspects of their operations.

In particular, Miniat established several key operational goals. First they required improved visibility into critical inventory and manufacturing data to improve planning and allow problems to be identified more quickly. They also needed to automate cumbersome transactions, especially for catch-weighted items that require each box to be handled separately. And finally, they needed to improve product tracking for ongoing quality assurance purposes.

From a technology perspective, Miniat required seamless integration to their ERP system. They had recently replaced a custom, in-house-built ERP system with an off-the-shelf solution. This created a new challenge because synchronizing the new software with legacy shop-floor processes required data to be maintained in both systems, adding considerable administrative expense. For this reason, rapid implementation was a high priority.

Solution

After a careful selection process, Miniat chose to partner with Coolearth Software, the experts in supply chain solutions for the food & beverage, chemical, and other process industries. Whistle™, Coolearth's leading supply chain execution (SCE) product suite, combines functionality for warehouse management, production execution, event management, and Web-based reporting. Whistle meets the unique supply chain needs of the process industries and integrates seamlessly to common manufacturing ERP packages.

Whistle was especially critical for managing catch-weighted production, which requires that boxes of product be individually weighed, labeled, and tracked. "With boxes coming down the line every few seconds, we simply couldn't manage our catch-weighted production without Whistle," said Allen. "There was no way to invoice for exact shipped weights without manually adding individual box quantities. Whistle has eliminated this task, saving us a tremendous amount of labor and increasing our accuracy as well."

"Whistle helped us become more efficient, which is crucial

in this economic climate," said Gerry Allen, Director of

Operations. "With Whistle, we spend

more of our time adding

value to our products and satisfying

our customers."



more of our time adding value to our products and satisfying our customers. Whistle reduces cumbersome data entry tasks and allows us to identify issues well before they become problems."

Whistle was designed expressly for manufacturers in the food & beverage, chemical, and other process industries. Industry-specific functionality supports Miniat's needs for quality assurance, product tracking, and first-expired-first-out (FEFO) stock rotation. Quality control is an especially critical issue in the meat industry, and Whistle's detailed tracking and bi-directional recall capabilities reduce both the likelihood of recalls and the costs associated with them.

Designed from the ground up to leverage the latest wireless technology, Whistle provides Miniat with the tools

they need to meet the demands of their toughest customers with reduced inventory-associated costs such as spoilage and excess recalls. Whistle's accurate, real-time data and integration with ERP and/or MES systems delivers warehouse transparency and allows Miniat to optimize their supply chain planning applications using real-time data.

"No other vendor offered such an outstanding match to our needs," said Allen. "Rapid implementation was a primary concern, and we were very pleased with the pace of the project."

Results

"Whistle has brought solid improvements in a number of areas," said Allen. "It used to take roughly 45 minutes to process an incoming shipment. Now it takes less than 30. And this is just one example—we have seen gains like this throughout the facility."

Whistle's strong functional fit and turnkey ERP integration enabled a rapid implementation, less than 90 days from project planning to rollout. And Whistle has allowed Miniat to shut down the legacy system, eliminating the need to maintain data in two systems. "No other vendor offered such an outstanding match to our needs," said Allen. "Rapid implementation was a primary concern, and we were very pleased with the pace of the project."

Whistle has improved quality control as well. John Nault, Director of Quality Assurance, said: "With Whistle, our shop-floor users have up-to-the-minute data on which individual pallets have cleared QA and are ready to ship. This improves our efficiency in addition to reducing the possibility for errors."

Further benefits that Whistle has brought to Miniat include:

TRANSPARENT FACILITY

Information latency at Miniat used to range anywhere from hours to days. Miniat now enjoys real-time visibility into all inventory and manufacturing activities.

DETAILED TRACKING

Whistle tracks inventory at every step, from receiving to production to storage to shipping, and leverages technologies such as barcoding to ensure data accuracy. Near-perfect inventory visibility allows Miniat to reduce standing inventory by 5% and to eliminate product loss due to expiration.

IMPROVED RECALL EFFICIENCY

Whistle allows Miniat to quickly carry out tight-banded recalls, instantly identifying—and placing on hold—all exposed product. With Whistle, Miniat can trace clearly from a customer shipment back to ingredient suppliers, or vice versa.

OPTIMIZED PROCESSES

Whistle's automated technology optimizes warehousing and inventory processes, improving productivity by **10%**, reducing inventory carrying costs by **5%** and supporting increased inventory turnover.

"We forecast that the Whistle implementation will pay for itself within nine months," said Allen. "We see this as an extremely worthwhile investment." With its investment in Whistle, Miniat can rest assured that the family-owned business will continue its long tradition of excellence and growth.



Coolearth is a leading provider of supply chain execution solutions to food & beverage, chemical, and other process manufacturers. Coolearth software is designed to fulfill the unique needs of hybrid production facilities requiring integrated warehouse management and shop floor execution solutions. Coolearth products go beyond traditional warehouse management systems built for distribution centers by cutting costs and improving efficiency throughout the entire production facility, not only the warehouse.

Coolearth enables total plant transparency in order to support supply chain initiatives relying on accurate, real-time inventory and production data. Coolearth integrates the business with the shop floor, leveraging existing assets such as backoffice and process control systems.

Coolearth was founded in 1997 and is based in Seattle, Washington. Coolearth has been named as one of the 100 fastest growing private companies in Washington State for two years running.

Coolearth Software, Inc.
2125 Western Avenue
Suite 208
Seattle, WA 98121

T (206) 770-9061
F (206) 770-3354

info@coolearth.com
www.coolearth.com