

SYSPRO is Sweet Solution for Chocolate Potpourri

"Inefficiencies prompted Chocolate Potpourri to seek an ERP solution with a single, integrated database that provided up-to-date, real-time data for utilization by accounting, manufacturing and distribution and for the purposes of efficient management decision-making."



■ The Company

It began with Marcia Gordon baking toffee in her kitchen. Word got around how delicious it was. In 1980, a pastry chef at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, who was also a family friend, brought Marcia a box of truffles and taught her how to make them. Marcia began selling her confections to party consultants and the business began to grow.

In 1983, Chocolate Potpourri became incorporated. In 1989 the company moved out of the house and into commercial space. Soon, more of the family became involved, led by Richard Gordon, Marcia's son, who is now the company president. Today, Chocolate Potpourri produces 22 different varieties of the truffles as well as toffee and other specialty chocolates. They boast 20 employees manufacturing their Veritas and How Sweet It Is brands out of their facilities in Glenview, IL. Business is conducted through multiple channels, including specialty food stores and catalogue houses, mail order, the Chocolate Potpourri website and private label manufacturing.

"We allow the customer to recreate the candy store experience."

- Richard Gordon President,
Chocolate Potpourri

■ The Challenge

Chocolate Potpourri had been using a rudimentary distribution software package that provided absolutely no data relating to the manufacturing side of the business. It also required hours of labor for exporting data for reports and importing it back into the system. In addition, ingredient inventory levels were maintained on a "hit and miss" basis with inventory levels calculated visually, a procedure very prone to error. Chocolate Potpourri relies heavily on orders placed on the company's website by individuals as well as other companies. The procedure to enter and fill the orders was cumbersome. Orders were placed via e-mail, necessitating their manual re-entry. The procedure was time-consuming and also prone to error.

■ The Solution

The desire to eliminate these inefficiencies prompted the company to seek an ERP solution with a single, integrated database that provided up-to-date, real-time data for utilization and analysis by accounting, manufacturing, distribution and for the purposes of efficient management decision making. Another goal was to replace paper with electronic documents and eliminate manual data entry.

Based on those requirements, the company selected SYSPRO software to run on their Windows 2003 and Windows 2000 Small Business operating systems. They installed an e-Commerce site built on the .NET® platform that allowed for authorization of credit cards as well as other XML-based capabilities.

■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Chocolate Potpourri

INDUSTRY

Food Manufacturing

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

20

THE CHALLENGE

- Inefficient inventory control
- Strict FDA regulations
- Multiple product lines
- Dozens of stock codes
- Limited visibility into accounting
- Tedious reporting processes
- Small business budget

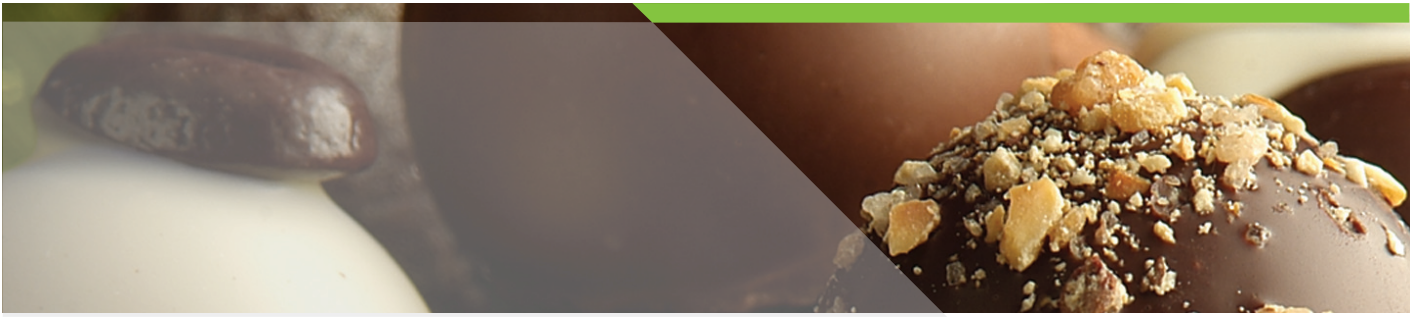
SOLUTION & SERVICES

- Inventory optimization
- Lot traceability
- Automated ordering through ecommerce
- Forecasting capabilities
- Link to shipping system
- Affordable software solution

THE BENEFITS

- Reduced inventory
- Increased visibility
- Efficient, faster reporting
- Streamlined FDA compliance
- Increased online sales
- Clear view of accounting
- Improved customer service
- Reduced order-to-delivery time
- More shop-floor management time
- Accurate production planning





Each of the 22 truffles produced represents a unique job and Bill of Materials. SYSPRO was implemented to help the company streamline the processes. Additionally, as an FDA-regulated company, the SYSPRO Lot Traceability module allowed the company to track the history and future of authorization of credit cards as well as other XML-based capabilities. Each of the 22 truffles produced represents a unique job and Bill of Materials. SYSPRO was implemented to help the company streamline the processes. Additionally, as an FDA-regulated company, the SYSPRO Lot Traceability module allowed the company to track the history and future of every ingredient coming into the warehouse.

■ The Result

Today, Chocolate Potpourri is gaining the efficiencies of an integrated, real-time database. Now data needs to be only entered once, and it is immediately available to all departments. What's more, this same data is available to the company's Worldship Shipping System, so that shipment information is automatically entered and totally reliable. The result has created a dramatic improvement in customer service thanks to a reduced order-to-delivery cycle.

Recently the company instituted a new feature where customers have the ability go onto the website and select each truffle individually and save the customized order so that it can be replicated later. "We allow the customer to recreate the candy store experience," says Gordon. He goes on to note that, because of the automated ordering process, the first time the company sees Web orders is either on the shop floor or in the shipping department.

The SYSPRO software allows Chocolate Potpourri to automatically adjust inventory levels sending e-mail alarms to management when ingredient safety levels are reached. Production lines need never be halted due to the lack of a key ingredient. In addition, SYSPRO Inventory Forecasting gives the company a window into future order fulfillment, allowing stock adjustments to be made accordingly.

The results are indicative that a relatively small company can utilize big-time technology to enable it to compete equally with larger competitors and, at the same time, enhance customer service.