

Cheer Pack North America addresses the challenges of growth with the agility of IFS and Microsoft Surface



When CDF Corporation rolled out IFS into its Cheer Pack North America unit, they enjoyed the immediate benefits of seamless ERP scalability as the company grew, and discovered a perfect solution for time-saving mobility with Microsoft Surface tablets for on-the-go access to customer data.

Managing explosive growth has been a major challenge for CDF Corporation and its Cheer Pack North America unit which specializes in the manufacture of flexible packaging such as small pouches for the food and beverages industry.

Such growth, driven by record customer demand and increasing sales, has seen Cheer Pack North America expand its manufacturing operations with the construction of an additional manufacturing plant and a hugely-increased workforce.

“Until 2011, we had about 125 employees,” says Alex Ivkovic, IT Manager at CDF Corporation and Cheer Pack North America. “From that point, growth has been astronomical where we now have over 270 employees and a major new plant.”

Maintaining production volume and product quality in the face of rising customer demand adds to the challenge. Ivkovic says Cheer Pack is constantly adding production capability and produced its 2.3 billionth pouch earlier in 2016.

Against this backdrop—the challenges of explosive growth, maintaining production volume and meeting rising customer demand—sits the company’s ERP system based on IFS.

About CDF Corp

Headquartered in Plymouth, Massachusetts, USA, CDF Corporation is a global leader in semi-rigid and flexible liquid packaging for the chemical, petrochemical, cosmetic, food and beverage and industrial markets.

Cheer Pack North America is a strategic partnership established in 2008 between Hosokawa Yoko (Japan), Gualapack (Italy) and CDF Corporation.

With production facilities in the United States and Switzerland and manufacturing alliances in Europe and Asia, CDF Corporation’s customer base today extends over six continents.

www.cheerpack.com

The modular approach

CDF Corporation has been an IFS customer since 2007 when the applications suite first gave them increased visibility of manufacturing operations. That has allowed the company to offer its customers aggressive delivery times with confidence due to the excellent available-to-promise functionality in IFS.

“We use IFS throughout our company,” Ivkovic says. “We use the customer service module. Manufacturing is huge and absolutely critical to our operation. The new quality module helps drive our quality initiatives. Document management gives us huge time savings as everything is scanned and filed electronically.”

Ivkovic points to the modular aspect of IFS that enables a business to install precisely what they need, with the ability to add newer functionality as their requirements evolve.

“Almost every need that someone brings to me, we have a way to cover it,” he declares. So it was a natural fit when CDF Corporation formed Cheer Pack North America and continued using IFS.

Raising awareness of opportunities

“It’s proven to be agile and flexible and I had every confidence that IFS could succeed,” Ivkovic says. Take customer relationship management (CRM), for instance—a key area for Cheer Pack. “We’ve been using the CRM module in IFS for several years,” Ivkovic says.

“We’re introducing it to the sales people at Cheer Pack, running classes and enabling them to use it to identify opportunities and drive future growth.” Ivkovic adds that he plans to bring the sales module in IFS to Cheer Pack as well to help sales staff drive new business and take advantage of capacity in the new plant.

Growth and the associated demands aren’t the only challenge Ivkovic is addressing as Cheer Pack North America continues its expansion.

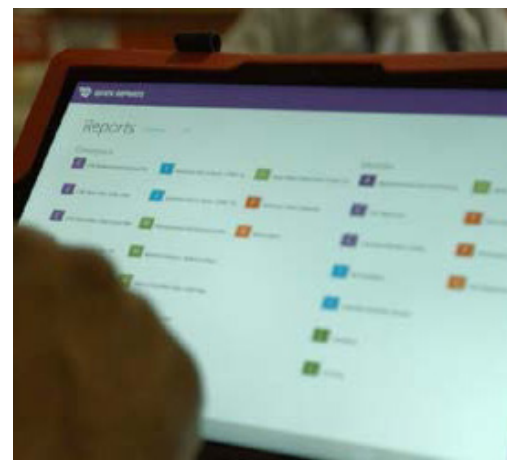
“One of our greatest challenges is lot traceability,” he states. “Our original production line system didn’t allow us to trace material to the level our customers wanted. With the agility of IFS, we were able to switch to a shop-order system that allows us far greater traceability.” The net result is clear, says Ivkovic: “We can meet all our customers’ needs now.”

Microsoft Surface and mobility solutions

Meeting employee needs for efficient interaction with ERP information wherever in the plant they happen to be, with access to the right information at the right time in real time, is also a key element in Ivkovic’s plans for IFS at Cheer Pack.

Benefits

- Complete stock visibility
- Seamless connection between sales, production and warehouse
- Real-time production data
- Centralized management and version control of documents
- Reduced costs through time savings



The right tool for employees who need access to information when mobile is via a mobile device, such as a tablet, that would complement their laptop computers.

“Initially, I resisted that because we could not find a tablet suitable to run IFS and most of our native applications,” Ivkovic reflects. “Then we found the Microsoft Surface. It could run IFS, and all of our native applications.”

After initial technical and usability testing, Microsoft Surface tablets were introduced within Cheer Pack, enabling key employees to interact with IFS while on the go, anywhere in the plant.

“We have more than thirty Microsoft Surface Pro tablets in use now,” he says. “They have become our laptop replacement.”

And Ivkovic is keen to highlight the benefits he sees that have resulted from deploying Microsoft Surface and IFS at Cheer Pack North America.

“By being able to answer questions from customer service or sales quicker, a warehouse coordinator can get answers to the customers quicker,” Ivkovic says. “Manufacturing is able to get access to the parts they need in a timely manner and keep manufacturing flowing. It has increased overall efficiency in the warehouse.”

And enabling supervisors to use IFS from wherever they are in the plant saves them an hour or two a week each, Ivkovic says, with time savings in the warehouse of several hours per employee per week.

Ivkovic believes that the agility of IFS helps him successfully address the challenges of growth and more, while maintaining production standards and continuing to satisfy existing customer needs.

It's proven to be very agile and flexible and I had every confidence that IFS could succeed.

Alex Ivkovic, CDF Corporation

Growing to the future

Growth will continue to occupy Ivkovic's time and attention as CDF Corporation continues its growth and expansion of Cheer Pack North America.

He says scalability has proven to be completely seamless: “As we grow, IFS just grows with us.” And he adds, “IFS works great on our Microsoft Surface tablets.”



Find out more

Further information, e-mail info@ifs.com, contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, ifs.com

