

CFC FOOD PARTNERS LTD

CFC Food Partners improves efficiency with BCP's Accord®

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— CFC Food Partners Ltd

Foodservice wholesaler, CFC Food Partners Ltd, is claiming company-wide improvements in operational efficiency from its investment in an Accord® distribution system from supply chain solutions specialist, Business Computer Projects Ltd (BCP).

The Company

Based in Wakefield, W Yorkshire, CFC Food Partners (CFC) is a rapidly growing foodservice wholesaler supplying cafes, sandwich bars, colleges and hospitals across NE England, covering a geographical area that extends from Middlesbrough in the north to Nottingham in the South and from Manchester in the West to Hull in the East. With its own fleet of 9 multi-temperature vehicles, the company provides a wide range of ambient, chilled and frozen foods, together with a selection of non-food items like disposables and cleaning materials. It specialises particularly in sandwich fillings (many of which it manufactures), bacon, cooked meats and tuna, often purchasing the latter in bulk and re-selling on a wholesale basis.



The Challenge

Investment in new technology was prompted by CFC's wish to modernise and improve efficiency, particularly relating to stock control and telesales, as a foundation for growth and expansion. Existing operations were largely manual and paper-based, with limited, very general, IT functionality. The company realised that a fully integrated, specialist foodservice solution would eliminate time consuming manual processes, streamline operations and support future growth. "We'd been struggling for a while and having to work hard to make up for the limitations of our existing system," says Shawn Giles, MD, CFC. "We realised that a sector specific solution would make life a whole lot easier and, if we chose carefully, would scale up to meet our needs as we grew."

The Solution

Following a thorough selection process, CFC opted for BCP's market-leading Accord foodservice system, investing in a complete solution to encompass Purchasing, Sales Order Management, Stock Control, Telesales, CRM and Financial Accounting.

BCP secured the contract because of its food and drink industry background, consistent track record of delivering successful implementations and, not least, Accord's powerful functionality, which proved an excellent fit for CFC's business. Shawn Giles: "It was as if the system had been designed especially for us. Its rationale and functionality just mirrored our business model."

The Results

The system has now been operational for some time and CFC has realised efficiencies across its business as it benefits from a fully integrated, powerful IT solution that controls all operations, delivers true visibility, improved business reporting and key sales, product and buying information. Particular improvements have come in the areas of Telesales/Sales Order Processing, Replenishment and Stock Management.



Telesales

CFC's existing Telesales operation was a paper-based order-taking system. Operators took orders 'blind' in terms of stock availability, which could adversely impact on service levels. With Accord, Telesales operators have real time stock and pricing data, plus a wide range of other information, including order history, promotions and new products, at their fingertips when taking orders. This means they can react quickly to customers' requirements, offer a high degree of customer service and work proactively to increase sales through cross-selling and up-selling. Shawn Giles: "The results have been excellent and the telesales operators really like it - it's so easy to use - so they can work more efficiently, contacting more customers each day. It's played a key part in helping us to grow the business. Sales have gone up significantly without any increase in staffing levels, which means we're operating more profitably." All CFC's orders are now handled via Accord telesales.

Replenishment

Purchasing has improved significantly with the use of Accord's purchasing and demand forecasting functionality. Not only is the company able to 'buy better' in terms of price and availability, but, critically, in terms of quantity, balancing orders and stock to minimise the occurrence of out of stocks while at the same time rationalising stock levels to minimise the amount of working capital tied up in stocks.

Stock Management

Stock control had been a challenge for the company with only physical stock showing on the existing system and a lack of integration, meaning orders were taken blind and a lot of time was spent on manual checking of stock. As a result, service levels were challenging. The new Accord system fully integrates Purchasing, Sales Order Processing and Stock, allowing CFC to streamline inventory levels, minimise losses from out-of-date products and significantly improve customer service levels. Shawn Giles: "We now know exactly what's in stock, where it is in the warehouse, what's on order and when it's due in, so we can satisfy orders much more efficiently."

Operations

Operations are now much more efficient, allowing optimum use to be made of human resources and there have been considerable improvements on the logistics side with Accord providing a much more flexible approach to logistics and planning customer deliveries on particular rounds on particular days.



Shawn Giles MD

Better stock control and more flexible delivery planning have contributed significantly to improved services levels which are now averaging around 98% - a vast improvement on previous service levels.

Since the initial implementation of Accord, CFC has extended its use to manage another foodservice depot in Hull on behalf of a charity, making use of Accord's powerful multi-depot functionality to manage operations at both locations. It's still early days there as the system only went live earlier in the summer, but already, the same benefits experienced at the main depot are coming through - across all areas - from stock management to sales, which are already increasing.

Shawn Giles, concludes: "Accord® is an excellent fit for our business, and has lived up to its reputation, delivering even more functionality than we'd expected. BCP itself has given us an A* service which we could not fault, always prepared to go that extra mile to satisfy our requirements." The company is now looking at extending the use of Accord's comprehensive pricing functionality and to make use of its CRM system in order to help manage further growth more efficiently. "Longer term, we'll be looking at implementing Accord's Voice Picking solution, to drive further efficiencies in the warehouse, and online ordering, which we believe will deliver benefits for both ourselves and our customers."