

FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

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Smart and Sophisticated

Gourmet sauce manufacturer achieves high-level customer relationship management

On the surface, More Than Gourmet appears to be a classic food manufacturer focused on old world traditions brought forth by the late Chef Master Auguste Escoffier. A closer look reveals a modern, entrepreneurial company producing gourmet French sauces and operating with innovative food processing technology, equipment, and methods.

More Than Gourmet's products are made with scrupulous care and supplied to fine restaurants, gourmet retailers, and industrial customers worldwide. Employees continuously strive to honor Escoffier's dictate: Properly made stocks and mother sauces are the key to fine cooking, and faultless preparation and the finest ingredients are mandatory.

In keeping with this focus on excellence, More Than Gourmet leaders want to extend a high level of service to their chefs, retailers, and other customers. However, due to the massive growth of the customer base, they were concerned that the company's existing methods of customer service could not accommodate future expansion.

Brad Sacks, More Than Gourmet chief executive officer and global managing director, explains that each salesperson was tracking his own customers' needs in his own way. "These methods ranged from stacks of file folders on a salesperson's desk to elaborate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets," he says. "There wasn't a central, consistent repository of information that was accessible to the organization."

To address this issue, More Than Gourmet decision makers turned to technology partner Technology Group International (TGI) for assistance. More Than Gourmet had been using TGI's enterprise resources planning software, Enterprise 21, for more than 10 years.

Company executives spent several months detailing the customer relationship management (CRM) requirements, reviewing iterations of development, and testing the solution to arrive at a new CRM module. "During our initial discussions with TGI, they made sure that they understood our business issues from all perspectives," Sacks says. "They then took that knowledge and developed a solution that would

fit seamlessly into our existing order entry system and be simple for our salesforce to navigate."

Easily accessible information

Each More Than Gourmet customer is assigned a customer type and workflow step designation within Enterprise 21. Workflow tables link each current type and step combination to a list of possible next type and workflow step combinations. The steps are set up to provide a higher level of customer support during the more critical times. Support calls for newer customers are scheduled in a shorter time frame than those for recurring customers.

All of the customer and contact information is readily available in one central database for review by anyone in the company. Each communication with a customer is documented within the CRM module and provides a running historical background. This includes all special circumstances, such as customer shipping needs or potential future projects the customer is working on.

When logging into the system each day, salespeople are given a list of prospects to contact. Each record contains



More Than Gourmet supplies its classic French sauces to professionals and home chefs around the world.

high-level information about the prospect, the method of required contact, and personal notes. It also provides the user with the ability to locate all necessary details from the company record. The list can be sorted on many different criteria, such as customer type, customer step, business location, or priority.

As a salesperson completes his list of daily calls, he enters the call results. These codes can be defined to automatically schedule a new call based on a future call date pertinent to the result code input. This automatic scheduling of calls ensures each prospect or customer is contacted in a timely manner, provides historical data for the account, and feeds information to an integrated data warehouse for analysis and review.

The software also offers flexible tools for the mass creation of calls or mass rescheduling of calls based upon selected criteria. "In less than a minute, I can move hundreds of

scheduled calls from one salesperson to another to meet current business needs," says Lisa Thompson, More Than Gourmet sales administrator. "This becomes very useful for tasks such as balancing the workload among our sales staff or initiating a sales blitz to a target group of customers."

Educated decisions

The Enterprise 21 solution also offers tracking of typical prospect data and buying criteria, such as a company's sales revenue, number of employees, customer grouping, lead source, probability ranking, or anticipated close date. Beyond the standard criteria, each Enterprise 21 customer has the ability to assign more than 20 industry-specific data fields and build user-defined tables to populate these fields in a controlled and system-driven manner. This not only creates a highly customizable databank of information related to the company's

sales, but also offers a customizable approach to contact management.

Before the upgrade, all of the salespeople knew their own customers, but they could not adequately respond to calls from customers who usually dealt with other members of the sales staff. Now a quick query on the customer record and a review of historical data enables any salesperson answering the phone to be effective.

The addition of an integrated decision-support system enables everyone in the organization to pull up quick and easy views of their customer base and related sales data. "With just a few filtering selections, I can drill down to low levels of detail and have many different views," says Bill Finnegan, More Than Gourmet vice president of sales and general manager. "If I want to look at sales for the last four years to every high-volume independent fine dining restaurant with an average check size between \$25 and \$35, I just need to apply the appropriate filters, and the report instantly displays."

Getting instant real-time information greatly enhances More Than Gourmet employees' ability to quickly understand the effects of their business decisions. This helps company decision makers reallocate resources or make total course corrections on any decision as needed.

Record sales

The new CRM functionality has greatly increased each salesperson's productivity, and the tool supports additional revenue growth every month. In fact, since the implementation of the new CRM module, More Than Gourmet has experienced record monthly sales—and has done so with a smaller sales department.

Specifically, a year-to-date comparison of 2005 versus 2006 yields an increase in sales of 15 percent and a decrease of 30 percent in inside sales resources. More Than Gourmet leaders report this equals a return on investment in just two months. Even more importantly, employees are better able to focus on what matters most—their customers. 