

D'ARRIGO BROTHERS OF CALIFORNIA

Solution Overview

Industry

Agriculture

Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

Frank, Rimerman Consulting LLC
San Jose, California, USA

Scenario

D'Arrigo Brothers needed a business management system to keep pace with their growing produce business.

Company Profile

D'Arrigo Brothers grows a variety of fresh produce commodities for shipment across the United States and Canada.

Benefits

Microsoft Business Solutions allowed D'Arrigo Brothers to develop multiple custom elements for controlling all aspects of their business.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains
Financials
Inventory and Order Processing
Customization Tools
Human Resource Management
Microsoft SQL Server™

Demographic Information

Number of Employees: 1500+
Number of Sites: 6
Number of Users: 55
Transaction Volume: sales-5,000/month
all transactions-25,000/month

Migrated from a mini mainframe running a COBOL accounting system

D'Arrigo Brothers of California needed a system that could control the business of fresh produce from planting to harvest to shipping. Microsoft Business Solutions responded to that need with a solution that could be modified to include a complete 'Produce Company' vertical to manage the different aspects of their business.

Started in the Santa Clara Valley in 1924 by brothers Andrew and Steven, D'Arrigo Brothers is currently one of the largest fresh produce growers nationwide. The company grows a variety of fresh produce commodities at farms scattered throughout California and Arizona. These various commodities are packaged for daily shipment to hundreds of different retailers, food service distributors and wholesalers across the United States and Canada.

D'Arrigo Brothers is credited with being the first grower to introduce broccoli to the American public. The trademark brand name, Andy Boy, is one of the most recognized trademarks in the produce industry. Today, the company is still run by many second and third generation D'Arrigo descendants, along with a staff of dedicated professionals.

The Search for a Solution

Five years ago, D'Arrigo Brothers was using a Hewlett Packard mini-mainframe running a COBOL accounting system. Concerns about Y2K along with the desire to have a better operating platform as the basis for future development and data integrity led D'Arrigo Brothers on a quest for a new solution to their accounting and business needs.

An outside consultant was hired to complete a system selection recommendation. The final decision was between Oracle and Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®. The Oracle system was unable to satisfy D'Arrigo Brother's specific demands for a new system. Microsoft Business Solutions was chosen because of its ability to be efficiently and effectively customized to control the entire business.

A Unique Solution

In a joint effort between D'Arrigo Brothers and the developers at Microsoft Business Solutions reselling partner, Frank, Rimerman Consulting, a project was initiated to integrate custom modules into the existing solution. In addition to standard functions, a complete 'Produce Company' vertical was developed to manage the many different aspects of the business.

This vertical contains 200 custom windows and more than 150 companion and stand-alone tables to extend the system functionality and provide for other sub-system enhancements and control.

"D'Arrigo Brothers' success today and in the future is directly related to our choosing [Microsoft Business Solutions] and Microsoft SQL Server as our technology to conduct business. We couldn't imagine being in business without it."

Steven Sieber
Director of IS
D'Arrigo Brothers of California
Company

The D'Arrigo Brother's system is unique in that all aspects of the business from planting through growing, harvesting, packaging, shipping, inventory, invoicing, accounts payable and receivable, payroll and all other business processes are controlled by Microsoft Business Solutions and the customized software.

D'Arrigo Brothers implemented add-ons to enhance the capabilities of their system including wireless scanning, which allows inventory transactions to be handled through scan guns. Another enhancement involves document imaging, which scans all documents pertaining to customers and vendors and places them in a document image database for later retrieval in the system.

An automated payroll option has also been added, saving time and decreasing paperwork. Rather than timecards, crew supervisors fill out timesheet templates that can be scanned in daily to update hours worked within the payroll module.

Successful Growth

Microsoft Business Solutions has proven itself as an asset to D'Arrigo Brother's business in many ways. The key to fresh produce is the need to ship product as soon as it becomes available. This system allows not only superior accuracy over inventory, but better visibility in a real-time mode for sales staff. The ability to change pricing based not only on competitor prices, but also on forecasted product availability and demand is vital in an industry where price can fluctuate on a daily or even hourly basis.

Other improvements are becoming apparent to the D'Arrigo Brothers management team. Business is growing, while headcount in the accounting, payroll and information systems departments has not increased. A two-person staff handles information systems for the entire company.

The flexibility of Microsoft SQL Server, combined with a constantly developing vertical has given D'Arrigo Brothers the platform they need to meet changing business needs as they are identified. Future plans include a completely automated Farm and Production system to manage land use, growing and harvesting functions in the field.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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