

Case Study

Superior Supply Chain Management Is the 'Secret Sauce'



Mullins Food Products has been an industry-leading sauce manufacturer since they first started bottling their popular, homemade barbecue sauce in 1934. Family owned and operated in Broadview, Illinois, Mullins manufactures and packs sauces and dressings for some of the largest quick-service restaurants in the world. The company's 330,000-square-foot facility produces millions of gallons of liquid food products every year, incorporating roughly 550 raw materials from 139 ingredient and packaging suppliers.

Challenges

- The quality assurance department at Mullins was solely responsible for maintaining requisite regulatory and product specific supplier documentation. This was no small task with supplier facilities requiring 10 documents each, along with 17 additional documents per item. Across all of its suppliers, Mullins had more than 10,000 hard copy documents stored in static files.
- The company experimented unsuccessfully with another document management system that proved hard to use, and efforts to consolidate all documentation had to be abandoned. As a result, the business was left with required documentation split between a digital system and paper files.

Solutions

To improve its document and supplier management processes, Mullins implemented TraceGains **Supplier Management** and **Supplier Compliance**. Mullin's executives quickly realized the difference, when the company passed their next annual BRC audit in record time. With TraceGains, the quality assurance staff easily pulled every document the auditor required within seconds. Before the TraceGains implementation, Mullin's employees would spend weeks searching through the previous document system and paper files, hoping to find what they needed to pass the audit.

Now, suppliers receive automated alerts when new documentation is needed, ensuring the business is always audit ready. This frees up the team to focus on higher-level tasks, such as process improvement. With TraceGains, employees can be confident that any documentation they hand over to an auditor is current, unlike in the past, when even an exhaustive search of online and offline documents offered little guarantee of accuracy.

Implementing Supplier Management and Supplier Compliance solutions not only streamlined the audit process for Mullins, it also improved cross-functional collaboration within the company. Before TraceGains, the quality assurance department assumed most of the responsibility for supplier documentation. Now, multiple departments at Mullins have login credentials so they can access critical information at any time. Not only did TraceGains streamline communication between the company and its vendors, it removed the burden of managing more than 10,000 documents manually by automating workflows and digitizing documentation.

"TraceGains is a 'living' system that automatically ensures our required supplier documents are easily available and up-to-date. With everything captured digitally, the system extracts data and converts it into custom reports and dashboards that help us better manage our suppliers."

- Mullins Food Products

Outcomes

- Since implementing TraceGains, Mullins Food Products has consistently been 365 Audit Ready™.
- Employees no longer have to search through paper files and an outdated file management system to find documents.
- Automatic workflows and alerts ensure that suppliers provide the necessary documents on time.
- Employees can now quickly and easily issue Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Supplier Corrective Action Requests (SCARs) directly from the system.
- TraceGains centralizes and digitizes Certificate of Analyses (COAs), receiving checklists, and CARs for better insight into items and suppliers.
- The system tracks supplier performance over time, with automatic scorecarding based on critical attributes, making it easier to identify and target problem areas.
- The company now has an early warning system to reduce the risk of non-conforming materials going into production.
- TraceGains gives employees in all departments access to supplier documents as needed rather than having to flood the quality assurance department with constant document requests.
- The system digitizes forms, extracts the data and converts it into custom reports and dashboards for powerful business insight.
- The company can hold suppliers accountable with greater insight into supplier performance.

“With FSMA regulations and the requirements needed from our suppliers for the ingredients coming into our facility, we really needed to nail down the document management piece of the quality systems program. TraceGains has been the perfect solution. The staff at TraceGains are so helpful and quick to respond to questions. Working in such a fast-paced industry, a short response time is very much appreciated.”

- Mullins Food Products

“The software is very user friendly. We have multiple departments at Mullins that use TraceGains: receiving, pricing, purchasing, product development, and QA. There are only a few “super users” at our facility and the system can be set up so that other groups can just view the documents and not edit anything. Our method for obtaining documents was very sporadic and unorganized before TraceGains. The TraceGains software has streamlined this process immensely.”

- Mullins Food Products

About TraceGains

TraceGains is a supplier compliance, quality management, and new product development cloud platform that helps food, supplement, and CPG companies deliver brand promise. TraceGains Network is where R&D, procurement, quality, and regulatory departments collaborate with suppliers globally to bring safe products to market faster. Thousands of supplier locations and data sources are combined to identify and qualify suppliers, precisely source items and ingredients, build recipes, negotiate specifications, and automatically collect supporting documentation. On average, companies find that 80% of their suppliers are already in the TraceGains Network, allowing them to immediately connect and collaborate. Managing risk is easy with automated alerts for key ingredients and formulas, and daily system updates on new and emerging supply chain threats and regulatory issues.

Learn More

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