

Case Study

Real Time Visibility Equals Real Time Solutions



Grupo Bimbo is the largest baker in the world, with more than 135,000 employees scattered across 32 countries overseeing nearly 200 plants. It's also the ninth largest company in Mexico, with more than \$14 billion in net sales. The company's primary product lines include "fresh and frozen sliced bread, buns, cookies, snack cakes, English muffins, bagels, pre-packaged foods, tortillas, salted snacks and confectionery products."

The data in today's food supply chain remains hopelessly scattered. Manufacturers are constantly receiving documents from suppliers, but struggle with how to best organize and access them. Can manufacturers, such as Bimbo, ever look into all that data and find, search, and analyze it quickly and coherently? This is a problem Bimbo, the world's largest baking company, faced as it continued to grow along with the supply chain. This is their story.

Challenges

The executives at Bimbo realized that the complexity of their business had increased to the point where their vendor management program simply wasn't adequate to meet the compliance requirements they saw coming, such as the Food Safety Modernization Act and the Global Food Safety Initiative. Bimbo was in the process of getting all of their facilities certified to a GFSI program, and they didn't have the horsepower to complete the project. They simply had too many facilities, in too many countries, handling too many ingredients provided by too many vendors. In short, it was just too much to handle.

Solutions

TraceGains' **Supplier Management** and **Supplier Compliance** software solutions allowed Bimbo to manage their suppliers with a configurable system that mimicked Bimbo's existing processes, so training was minimal. Plant employees immediately understood what to do and how to do it because all they were doing was translating the paper process they had in place for decades, into a software process.

- **Productivity Investigations:** TraceGains now gives Bimbo the ability to do productivity investigations. This allows executives to ask questions like: "Who's our best supplier?; who's our worst supplier of flour?; who has the most on-time deliveries?; or who is most often late with deliveries?"
- **Supplier Behavior:** The benefit of having in-depth insight into all supplier behaviors is the ability to address issues they previously might have been unaware of, such as how many vendors are having problems with late deliveries, or out-of-spec deliveries, or broken bags?
- **Contamination:** With TraceGains, if someone receives a product lot and discovers contamination, immediately that product lot can be placed on hold, not only in their facility, but in all facilities. Quickly locked down, it is not received into inventory.
- **Allergens:** TraceGains allows Bimbo to easily identify all the key allergens in every plant. As Heflich points out, there is simply no room for error.
- **Risk Assessment:** Thanks to TraceGains, Bimbo has a process in place that keeps track of the needed documents, and automatically notifies the vendor when a document is about to expire and needs to be replaced.

Bimbo discovered TraceGains® with a ready, off-the-shelf solution that met their needs. TraceGains emerged as the frontrunner because it offered a comprehensive, complete, and elegant solution for Bimbo's key issues.

Outcomes

- Today, tracking a product is much easier, and much more powerful. Bimbo is now able to identify problems faster, even problems previously not discovered. This makes it much easier for them to approach the vendor in question, analyze their performance historically, track it, trend it, and ensure everyone is in compliance. If someone is not in compliance, proper action can then be taken.
- Bimbo was immediately able to perform real-time productivity investigations with the push of a button.
- The new systems allowed the manufacturer to quickly identify contaminated product and communicate those findings quickly to every plant simultaneously, while also notifying the supplier in question.
- Identifying allergens and managing risk assessment also became much more manageable thanks to TraceGains software solutions.
- Finally, Bimbo was also able to track every supplier's performance historically, making it much easier to identify and target problem areas.

Tracking historical performance is critical. It helps Bimbo dig into how a vendor performs over time, and if there are any "blips." This is something the company was never able to do comprehensively before, especially across all their vendors. They could previously track a couple of ingredients—such as flour—rather extensively, but it was a time-consuming process.

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TraceGains' process allows Bimbo to share documents across the network. So, a vendor can input a document once, making it readily available to 200 or 300 different customers. This saves valuable time, making it easier for Bimbo to get both their vendor and supplier partners onboard with the TraceGains program—so these partners can also start reaping the benefits.

"We might not notice, for example, that there's a problem with supplier X because it's only a single issue, or one or two complaints a year in each plant, but added together, it could pile up to 30, 40, or 50 complaints annually, and suddenly, the scope of the problem becomes clear."

- Len Heflich,
Vice President of Food Safety,
Quality, and Crisis Management

"Maybe there are some suppliers who we've worked with to improve those issues, but they don't improve. They continue to fail. Well, that's the time to go look for somebody else. And again, that can save us a lot of money and problems.

That used to be a big risk for us because we often didn't communicate adequately with them, so it's critical to be able to catch these issues in real time, communicate it accurately and quickly without mistake, and without missing a facility. So TraceGains has really helped us tighten up that whole process. The same also applies with our vendors."

- Len Heflich, Vice President of Food Safety, Quality, and Crisis Management

About TraceGains

Founded in 2008, TraceGains connects people and information so teams can work smarter. As a global technology company, we provide networked innovation and compliance solutions to consumer brands that want to reduce supply chain risk, speed up business processes, and take control of their data. On average, companies find that 80% of their suppliers are already on TraceGains Network, allowing them to instantly connect and collaborate.

Learn More

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