



SOFTENGINE SAP BUSINESS ONE CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Choice Organic Teas

Softengine Food One proves to be the right choice for industry leader in certified organic teas



Quick Facts

Name: Choice Organic Teas

Location: Seattle, Washington

Industry: Food & Beverage

Products: Organic Certified Teas

Website: choiceorganicteas.com

ERP: SAP Business One + Food One by Softengine

“We were looking for SAP Business One to provide a dashboard or a confluence of information that would assist us in our decision-making on a managerial level”

Ray Lacorte,
VP of Operations

Since its inception in 1989, Seattle-based Choice Organic Teas has maintained an unwavering commitment to organic certified teas, a dedication to ensure the ethical treatment of workers who cultivate tea and a tireless advocacy for growth and development of organic agriculture in tea estates worldwide.

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Softengine helped Choice Organic Teas to fully automate the company's inventory, production and accounting processes.

Challenge

Perseverance and patience are great qualities and Choice Organic Teas demonstrated an abundance of both in a nearly never-ending quest to find an ERP solution that they could trust to manage their accounting, production and inventory.

The company's initial foray into the world of business automation was an accounting program that was intended to primarily assist with billings and collections. Unfortunately, the system was erratic and as a result, staff resorted to duplicate data entry on manual spreadsheets in an attempt to stay on top of its accounts receivable. The company eventually dumped the program in favor of Intuit's popular accounting programs, Quicken and QuickBooks, which enabled them to export their financial statements into Excel. Choice Organic Teas hoped these programs would at least eliminate the need for duplicate data entry and make their accounting processes more efficient.

Over the next few years, Choice Organic Teas invested in updated machinery to handle the increased product demand and they automated some of their production components, such as tea bagging. However, with their outdated and overmatched business systems now clearly an "achilles heel," management set out once again to find that elusive ERP solution that could provide more timely and accurate data flow and reporting from purchasing, production and sales to accounting.

Solution

As the search heated up, Choice Organic Teas concluded that a cloud-based ERP solution would be an asset, with its reduced hardware and IT costs. Ray Lacorte, VP of Operations, had already discovered the SAP Business One system and its reputation as a great fit for the food and beverage industry. The fact that SAP customers actually produce more than 82% of the coffee and tea consumed in this country speaks to the software developer's dominance in the industry.

The next step was to find an SAP Partner who could demonstrate the software and perform the implementation quickly and cost effectively. Their search led them to Softengine, an SAP Gold Partner out of Woodland Hills, CA, with a successful track record of SAP Business One installations for the food and beverage industry. Management contacted Softengine and arranged for them to come to Seattle to evaluate their situation and make a proposal.

During their visit, Softengine closely studied the unique characteristics of Choice Organic Teas' business model and proceeded to design a solution to fully automate the company's inventory, production and accounting processes. Specifically, the system had to be able to accurately track all ingredients used in their single origin teas and blends, and help maintain inventory levels in order to keep up with demand for the more than 200 SKU's the company sells. Management was hoping for better traceability and tracking all the way from original purchase of ingredients from the source to finished goods.

The implementation process required importing all the customer, vendor and product data from the company's existing QuickBooks and ERP programs into SAP Business One. The new solution was set up so that all materials and inventory parts associated with work orders and bills of materials could be tracked all the way through the manufacturing process. The tea production process is highly complex and there are many variables to consider. One variable is the rather common scenario when a "parent" ingredient is used in the production of several different products. For example, a parent item such as a 30-pound "chest" of loose tea is incorporated into a variety of finished goods – two-pound bags, 3.5-ounce bags, tea bags or simply sold as is.

"We feel like we are in great hands with Softengine and the SAP Business One system they installed. It's nice to finally put all those unreliable ERP systems and redundant procedures in the rear-view mirror."

Ray Lacorte, VP of Operations

Results

Choice Organic Teas finally has a solution they can depend on.

"We found a system that has helped make us a stronger company," said Lacorte. "It's reliable, accurate and timely in delivering the information we need to make the best possible management decisions. Receiving, product fulfillment, shipping and invoicing have improved considerably since day one and the redundancies that have plagued us for so long are finally a thing of the past. Moreover, this solution has provided us with a forum for our company to reevaluate all of our processes and procedures and refine, as needed.

"Regarding his company's experiences with Softengine, Lacorte is no less enthusiastic in his appraisal. "Softengine and Choice Organic Teas were able to work together harmoniously to establish a blueprint for implementation, training and application."