CLASSIC DESSERTS

INSPIRED BY THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

— SINCE 1991 —

Dessert Manufacturer Finds Sweet Success with VicinityFood and Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central

Customer

Classic Desserts Ltd.

Website

www.classicdesserts.co.uk

Industry

Food Manufacturing

Organization Size

100 employees

Headquarters

Penrith, United Kingdom

Former Solution

QuickBooks

New Solution

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central

Highlights:

- Easy transition from QuickBooks to Dynamics 365 Business Central
- Lot tracing reduced from 4 hours to 4 minutes
- Accurate inventory control reduced costs by 40%

About Classic Desserts

Classic Desserts is a premier dessert manufacturer based in the UK, supplying retail outlets and distributors with the finest frozen pastries, cakes, toffee puddings, and other tasty delights made with the highest quality ingredients. The innovative team is continually creating new products, with multiple components in each recipe, and tracks more than 1000 SKUs for ingredients and packaging. With sales in excess of £8 million (over $9 million USD), this startup has experienced sweet success while positioning itself for future rapid growth.

The company started using VicinityFood with its QuickBooks Online system. When it became clear that QuickBooks was limiting their growth, they made a smooth transition to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central and realized even more value from the VicinityFood batch manufacturing system.

The Challenge

When Classic Desserts was getting started, QuickBooks Online was the logical fit for their accounting needs. It lacked manufacturing-specific functionality, so they relied on painful manual processes to handle scheduling, lot traces, inventory management, and more. This resulted in several challenges.

As a British Retail Consortium (BRC) certified food manufacturer, Classic Desserts is subject to surprise traceability audits which require them to produce lot trace reports in just 4 hours. If they failed to comply in time, they could lose their certification and most of their client base with it. This manual exercise would require complete attention and could pose a real risk to the company.

Keeping track of raw materials inventory was another problem. Accurately measuring ingredient usage was impossible, and ordering more supplies was accomplished with a "best guess" of their upcoming needs at the end of each month, often tying up valuable working capital in excess inventory to prevent stockouts.

Benefits of QuickBooks with VicinityFood

Despite the challenges, Classic Desserts grew quickly. It became clear that a batch manufacturing software solution was necessary to more easily meet regulatory demands and gain greater control over inventory, warehousing, and production processes.

While they evaluated several options that would integrate with their existing QuickBooks system, some add-on providers were quickly rejected when their software failed to perform even during the demo. By contrast, VicinityFood by Vicinity Software covered all the requirements and more and was the clear winner.

Lot Queries and Traceability

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Inventory Accuracy

In the past, the company was not tracking material or ingredient consumption day to day, instead doing month-end adjustments when the stock would go out.

According to Ben, "That's just not an efficient way to run a warehouse because you operate with higher working capital. VicinityFood makes us look at what will be manufactured over the next 8 to 12 weeks, allowing us to decide when we buy things to hold less inventory. We're also looking at the purchase dates of all the ingredients in our warehouse, reducing the number of expired goods we write off."

The VicinityFood system now gives them more accurate inventory control, which has reduced their working capital investment by as much as 40%.

From QuickBooks to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central

In time, it became very obvious that QuickBooks was limiting them from moving their operations to the next level. Plus, some of the advanced features in VicinityFood could not be fully utilized. The company decided to migrate from QuickBooks Online to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.

With the help of a local Microsoft Dynamics VAR, they were soon live with the new Business Central system.

Classic Desserts appreciates that Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central is a more open system, allowing deep access to company data that can be leveraged for advanced reporting and visualizations using Power BI. It also enables other advanced functionality, including more complex accounting features and the use of barcode scanners in the warehouse to accurately track inventory movements.

However, by itself, Business Central only handles discrete manufacturing, lacking the necessary functionality for batch manufacturers to produce an accurate yield analysis, manage quality assurance processes, and other critical functions. VicinityFood was still a key component.

The team at Vicinity smoothly integrated VicinityFood with Business Central to complete the new, end-to-end

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accounting, inventory, warehousing, and production control system.

Ben commented, "Vicinity did their part quickly and efficiently; moving the data from QuickBooks was easy for them. We were able to move to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central and continue using VicinityFood uninterrupted."

Benefits of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central with VicinityFood

VicinityFood, now integrated with a full-fledged ERP solution, is able to work for Classic Desserts in new ways. Ben mentions: "I knew that there was some functionality within VicinityFood that didn't work on QuickBooks, such as tracking expiration dates. This is critical for us because we have so many different work-in-progress products with a short shelf life. Now we can track this in Business Central. Simply put, the VicinityFood product works better for us now that we are on Business Central."

Batch Planning

In the past, Ben spent a considerable amount of time manually building batch tickets because so many different components needed to be included in every product.

Using the manufacturing resource planning (MRP) tools within VicinityFood, he can load the finished product, letting the system itemize all of the components and build the batch tickets. Now, planning batches for the following day takes minutes instead of hours.

Barcodes and Performance Monitoring

Classic Desserts has also been able to implement their plan to use barcode scanners across their warehouse and production locations. Ben noted, "Although some of

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our staff do not consider themselves to be tech-savvy and were apprehensive about the change, they now love the barcodes because it makes their lives so much easier." This new system allows them to register the location where the received goods are stored, the Julian lot number (a form of lot dating) to ensure freshness, and to track the ingredients through the production process thereafter.

Ben says, "The monitoring and reporting in VicinityFood have really helped our company culture. In the past, when our production staff completed the day's work, we could not give them any feedback on their performance. Now they know when they had a good day and how it positively impacts the company. The guys in the warehouse feel good about their work, and they are excited to try and beat their numbers to make it a bit better tomorrow. We are having better conversations in the factory about performance thanks to VicinityFood."

Excellent Support Enables Future Goals

Since adding the VicinityFood system, Classic Desserts has grown by approximately 80%, and they still have ambitious future plans. As part of this plan, Classic Desserts intends to leverage more of Vicinity's features, including production scheduling and quality assurance.

When speaking about his relationship with the Vicinity Software team, Ben says, "The team at Vicinity has been very helpful and their response time has always been excellent, even with the time zone difference. We give our feedback, and they continue to come out with new features. Right now, I'm the happiest guy in the world, honestly. The only thing I feel bad about is that I'm not using VicinityFood enough. There is more I need to unlock, and it's exciting for me to know it is there."

Adding more production shifts, meeting the increasing demand from domestic clients, and responding to the requests to export their products abroad will keep them busy in the next chapter of the Classic Desserts story, which will certainly include VicinityFood.

Ben concluded, "Earlier this year, we started our continuous improvement program, and Vicinity has been a core part of that. Without VicinityFood, it simply would not have the same impact. I am very happy I invested in the VicinityFood system."

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