Kerridge
Commercial Systems

For success choose an ERP system that can grow with you

Sarnia Foods develops and manufactures food products for a variety of brands that, for whatever reason, are unable to take their own ideas forward into manufacturing. This allows their clients to concentrate on sales and marketing while the Sarnia team source packaging and ingredients and manage stock, production, packing and shipping. Through a direct link to some of its clients' websites, the Sarnia team can take orders directly.

Sarnia Food & Drink Manufacturing

Sarnia currently produces products such as soups, sauces, juices, smoothies and vegetarian sausages and burgers. Clients also send products manufactured elsewhere to Sarnia for them to pack and ship. To keep transports costs down, the team has designed specialist packaging that keeps products frozen for 48 hours. Director, Patrick Finigan, said, "Generally we act as an extension of our clients' business. We're often the point of contact for their customers too if there are any issues."

"To save us the disruption of moving again in around five years, we recently decided to take a big step and move to a much bigger factory," continued Patrick. "Upgrading from a 3,000 sq ft site to one of 21,000 sq ft has enabled us to operate larger manufacturing, packaging and storage facilities and to keep everything on one site."

Patrick and his business partner set up Sarnia Foods in 2013 and both had clear views about the type of software they wanted to drive the company. "We knew we wanted to work directly with a software provider, rather than a reseller, because from experience we knew this would give us more influence over the software's future development. We also wanted a system that held all our data in one place - rather than having to resort to using tons of spreadsheets. And it obviously had to have all the functionality we needed as a food manufacturer, such as batch traceability and the ability to cope with variables – the weight of cauliflowers for example! Finally, we wanted a Cloud based system so we didn't incur the capital costs of installing our own server or have the hassle of maintaining it and running back ups."

When the team from Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS) contacted Patrick to talk about K8 LV software, he thought it sounded too good to be true! "It gave us everything we needed, and I know we made the right decision," he said. "We wanted to reduce the paper trail involved in our business and the system has allowed us to utilise scanning throughout all our processes and barcode everything as it goods in.

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Patrick Finigan. Director, Sarnia Foods

K8 LV

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We were able to address rotation issues and start seeing exactly what yields we were getting."

The software comes into play at the costing stage. Sarnia receives a recipe in a spreadsheet and can produce a costing quickly and accurately from the average and standard costs held in the system. It also documents recipe development and holds various versions that you can switch between. Once the recipes are finalised the team moves on to factory trials.

During production, the software allows works orders to be tailored to each client and CCPs (critical control points) and other information can be highlighted. This functionality was already incorporated in the core system but Sarnia is working with KCS to develop the extra scanning and barcoding they require at each stage.

"Currently we still need to manually record and sign off some CCP information such as weight, temperatures and times, but we are working on removing all paperwork completely and eventually doing everything by scanner," said Patrick.

Once works orders are raised for the day the team generate a production plan on the system that shows all recipes by production line, the quantity expected and any customer requirements such as printed product codes. Production staff can then scan the recipe bar code to find out what ingredients to pick. Trays of manufactured products are barcoded before leaving the high care area and then scanned and recorded on receipt in the warehouse. Patrick explained, "Although we are having to record each batch, it saves us the time we used to spend on checking and filing manually – and we have so much more confidence in our stock. Our pick accuracy has also increased tremendously since we started doing this with our finished goods."

The bulk of Sarnia's product range is frozen and customers pick and choose from what's in stock. Patrick said, "We print out barcoded sales orders each day and these are scanned to see what needs to be picked. KCS is currently developing further functionality for us so we can print out the delivery label and automatically send confirmation to the customer that their order is picked and ready to be dispatched. The system already allows us to set up a customer's minimum shelf life and won't let you pick anything that is short dated. We also generate a daily report to everyone's inbox that shows us raw products close to their expiry date, so we can carry out visual inspections on products such as beetroot for example."

During a recent audit the system helped the Sarnia team produce all the information required during product traceability studies. "The bigger you get in the food industry the more inspections you have," said Patrick, "but we've got everything we need covered in the system. As a base model for a food manufacturer, we think it's absolutely fantastic! It forces our operators to record information when it's required but you can also tweak it to change fields, for example, when you need to. It's invaluable and we simply couldn't run the business like we do without it. Today I think it's crucial to have a system that's flexible enough to cope with the ever-changing environment in the food industry and in people's shopping habits. We wanted a system that gave us everything we needed but would also grow with us and allow us to look forward, and that's what we've got!"

Contact Kerridge Commercial Systems

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