Case Study
TraceGains ERP Integration Automates Visibility Into Material Lot Quality

San Antonio-based C.H. Guenther & Son (CHG) is a privately owned food manufacturer that's delivered high-quality products and "just baked from scratch" flavor for nearly 170 years. Founded in Texas in 1851 by German immigrant Carl Hilmar "C.H." Guenther, the global company employs more than 3,000 people in 24 manufacturing locations scattered across the United States, Canada, and Western Europe.

CHG is a leading supplier of value-added grain-based and frozen food products for foodservice clients and select consumer markets. CHG's portfolio of retail brands include Pioneer, White Wings, Sun-Bird, and Cuisine Adventures. Their customers are leaders in the food service, consumer and restaurant markets.

Chicago Pritzker Private Capital acquired the company in 2018.

Challenges

The company is growing rapidly, and the volume of certificates of analysis, suppliers, and plants grows just as quickly. Keeping up with this growth was becoming a very time-consuming and labor-intensive task. The process was not only redundant, but risked human error.

"A COA would come in, preceding the shipment or accompanying it, and immediately somebody would grab the COA and compare it against what's reflected in the specification sheet. The problem is: humans make mistakes. We had customers who required double verification that the COA matched the specs, so we would have one technician performing this validation, followed by a second person doing the same thing. We wanted a better, easier, more efficient way to do it," explains Juan De Leon, Senior Global Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance.

CHG also needed a solution that would work seamlessly with SAP, their existing ERP, and across nearly a dozen plant locations. CHG used to store COAs in a SharePoint database but there was no integration whatsoever with SAP.

Solutions

TraceGains collaborated with CHG to connect their **Supplier Compliance and Supplier Management** with SAP using TraceGains' standardized API suite. Now they have a seamless interface that starts with TraceGains comparing COAs with specifications and then telling SAP which lots are out-of-spec and on hold for resolution. Plant team members can work more efficiently as they don't spend time manually determining which ingredients are out-of-spec.

This integration has increased visibility all the way from the Quality department onto the plant floor, allowing the company to more easily ensure their high quality standards.

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Outcomes

Seamless Validation. CHG can now validate COAs more quickly, efficiently, and accurately. If the COAs in TraceGains don't match up electronically with their specifications in SAP, they are automatically alerted. Then their team can reject it and stop the shipment before it even leaves the supplier's loading dock. "We're getting way, way in front of where we were when it was a manual process," says George Muller, VP Information Services & Chief Information Officer.

Corrective Action Requests (CARs). TraceGains helps CHG issue CARs quickly and to multiple suppliers at once. It's inherent built-in features also allow them to filter information and generate reports on important risk information such as which suppliers are driving issues, or reports on data for a single location. "These CARs features are going to take us to the next level when it comes to supplier management," De Leon says.

Standardized Growth. CHG has strategically standardized on infrastructure, applications, and business processes so they have a repeatable, sustainable playbook that allows them to grow at a fast pace without any disruptions to the business and to serve their customers better. TraceGains' robust solution and flexibility to integrate with SAP has made it a vital part of CHG's standard footprint.

Future Enhancements. "TraceGains continues to expand and enhance their suite of tools, this reaffirms the decision we made back in 2014. TraceGains is serious about being a market leader in this space by making the investments necessary, to differentiate them from their competitors and to add value to their customers like us," Muller asserts.

Partnership. CHG and TraceGains have a true partnership. They've collaborated to develop solutions for industry challenges and both companies truly want the other to be successful. "That's not something you see in every business relationship, but it sure is enjoyable and pleasant when it does happen," Muller explains.

> "Now a supplier can provide this information in advance. As a shipment is being loaded in their facility, they can send that information to us. When the shipment arrives at our dock, we've already looked at the information. By the time it shows we saw it, it's unloaded without any major complications or delays."
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> *– Juan De Leon,*
> *Senior Global Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance*

> "SAP is at the heart and soul of our business processes. That's our ERP system. We have 19 of our 24 plants operating on SAP today. And we have nine of our plants running TraceGains and more to follow. This is not a destination, it's a journey."
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> *– George Muller, VP Information Services & Chief Information Officer*

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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