

Valley Cooperative | Powered by VAI



The Company

Five bakers founded Valley Cooperative in 1949 after deciding they could run their bakeries more profitably and more efficiently if they stored truckloads of goods in their garage. Today the business has expanded to a much larger garage that supports numerous bakeries, with over 280,000 square feet of space. Valley Cooperative provides delivery services to nearly 1,500 clients across Wisconsin, ranging from in-store grocery stores to retail bakeries and even institutions.

Established
1949

Located
Billerica, Massachusetts

Industry
Wholesale Distribution, Durable Goods

Requirements
Mobile WMS, Conveyors, Demand Planning, Analytics, eBusiness

The Solution

Before implementing VAI's S2K ERP software, Valley's previous supplier was sunsetting its product and Valley did not want to move forward with any other solutions they were offering. "It's either you go to our new model, or, we're going to have to get you on something different," said Rich Wise, CEO at Valley. "So, we went out and we looked at four different software companies, and we decided VAI is the software solution we're going to go with."

Prior to the implementation of VAI's S2K ERP software, Valley's previous supplier was sunsetting its software product and the Valley had no interest in pursuing any more solutions from them. Rich Wise, CEO of Valley, stated, "They told us that we could either use our new model or they would have to get us on something different. We decided that VAI is the software solution for us, after looking at four different software companies."

The fact that VAI ERP software is an entirely integrated, one-stop shop is important to Valley. "We had bolt-ons upon bolt-ons in our old system, which we no longer wanted," Wise added. "We combined everything into a single, all-inclusive ERP system from VAI. Now, we get our data

the next day without having to wait for downloads every night. For us, VAI's S2K ERP is an excellent product."

Valley places a lot of importance on VAI's mobile solution because not all its customers have access to computers in their immediate workspaces. With VAI Mobile, customers can examine their board, browse the bakery, and add products to their cart whenever necessary. If not, they could have to go into a different area that might be farther away from the location where the bakery's information and materials are really stored, or they might have to wait until they arrive at their home office to place orders. Thus, Valleys' customers have benefited much from it.

Valley also uses VAI Analytics software powered by IBM Cognos to create user-friendly dashboards and reports that are easy to access for the team. With numerous huge screen TVs in their warehouse, Valley created picker productivity boards using the Analytics tool, which enable them to display the number of cases ordered, the number of cases batched, the number of cases still to be selected, and the number of cases already picked.



The Results

Since Valley has rolled out the My Valley Website, it has been a huge advantage for Valley customers who have loved it. Said Jeremy Smith, CFO, “We’ve been able to enroll more customers utilizing VAI eCommerce for ordering. The pictures and order and quantity availability have been critical and key for them to see. They still get the Valley touch, and we still have the human interaction, but it provides another avenue for them to get their orders more quickly to us which we can process faster for them.”

Valley takes orders through a combination of VAI’s e-commerce technology and customers calling in. Those have a cutoff of one o’clock pm. For a certain part of the day, Valley pulls orders in through RoadNet/Omnitracs, which is its routing management software. RoadNet/Omnitracs is to plan and optimize truck delivery routes. At about 3:30, Valley begins batching routes. “We have built certain trailers by cubes and weight. That’ll control how VAI software builds the units of work when we process the batches.

From there, we can process or not process as many times as we want, until we get the truck we want,” said Mike Smith, IT Network Administrator.

Valley can choose which trailer to batch with by using a screen that shows an overview of pounds and cubes. The units are then sent to work at the warehouse where they are marked. At the item location, the picking quantity is calculated and confirmed. Should Valley choose to reduce the amount, they might simply press a function key, perform a short, and declare that it’s gone.

“We have an automated shorting process which will generate a short unit of work automatically and then the manager can review the short, see if we have it here, and then assign it to somebody to go and pick it,” Mike Smith explained. Like short chasing, they have two options: either they go find the pallet or case, pick it up, and load it onto the truck, or it gets shorted and appears on the short report.

Together, Valley and VAI developed a software program with Valley’s third-party logistics partner to manage the transit and storage, including inbound receipt, billing, and storage renewals. In terms of transit, Valley handled order creation or backorders for the transit line and billed those out; this was a

smooth procedure. The Valley and VAI team also developed a web portal for third-party logistics customers to see their stock at all times, which is crucial given the sensitive nature of some of their products and/or the volume of inventory they can transport to clients.

Valley runs its VAI ERP on the IBM® Power® Systems, which offers strong security as well as superior virtualization and management tools for flexibility and a clear TCO advantage for a business. IBM Power is also renowned for its performance and scalability even under the most taxing workloads. “We really like the IBM Power System,” said Shane Polakowski, IT Manager. “It’s stable, secure, and easy to pull data from the system.”

Valley is excited about the future with VAI and with their system in place, look ahead to what’s coming next from VAI to help their business in the future.

Since the launch, Valley Cooperative has been using VAI’s ERP software to:

- Leverage VAI Mobile for customer convenience
- Enroll more customers with VAI eCommerce
- Increase warehouse picker productivity with VAI Analytics
- Strong, secure, reliable computing with IBM Power Systems server