

# Natural Choice Foods | Powered by VAI



## The Company

Natural Choice Foods (NCF) has been in business for 25 years. The company began primarily as a wholesale food distributor operating in the discount market, helping their vendors clear closeouts and expiring inventory. The company has opened five retail stores over the years and is wholesaling in 30 states. NCF also started a USDA repack facility where it takes private label products for companies like Walmart and Kroger, de-brand the products, and then package it under NCF's own brands and distributes it back out into the market. NCF sells to a wide variety of discount grocery stores, correctional facilities, and other wholesalers, as well through their retail channels to the general public.

### Industry

Wholesale Distribution, Food & Beverage

### Requirements

Warehouse Management  
Software, Repackaging, Analytics

## The Solution

Prior to selecting and implementing VAI's S2K ERP solution, putting together deal sheets for their customers was a very tedious, cumbersome task. NCF did that in Outlook, providing a picture, typing up general information on the product, such as item code, pack sizing, and product dating. With the addition of VAI S2K, NCF can click a button in the system to see all information that's needed, including pictures, that can be taken and sent directly to the customer in a five-second process versus a couple minute email.

VAI Smart Center provides great data on daily, weekly, and monthly numbers. It's all live in the system, accessible from the click of a button. Reports run very fast. Prior to this, NCF's old system reports took 10-20 minutes to run and now they're there within 5-10 seconds.

"We are an overstock buyer," said Tony, Krenselewski, Warehouse and Inventory Manager at NCF. "A lot of our purchasing is done through a bid process, or it may be an offer sheet but we're basically picking up other companies distress freight. Our receiving process is a little unique in that when we receive product, it requires a lot of editing whether that be adding POs to a cargo or truck, adding items, or subtracting items from

a purchase order, changing quantities, and applying different best buy dates and creating lots. There were some enhancements we needed to create so that we could do all of this on the fly."

In the past, NCF would receive everything on paper and record the quantities and the item number. One label would be put on the pallet, and everything was written down including the placement of items in the warehouse. With VAI WMS, NCF can create a pallet label that is scannable with exact quantities and scan it from place to place or from bin to bin, from dock to the put-away location. It has put away location which has sped up that process immensely. The accuracy of NCF's inventory is reflected in the company's shipping, with a 99.5 percent plus accuracy on a consistent basis. Prior to implementing VAI's WMS, the company's fulfillment was around 96 percent.

"In the past, our picking process and fulfilling orders were done on paper, where we would print out a pick list, give it to a picker, and they would build pallets off that pick list," continued Krenselewski. "With VAI, we have instituted RF guns. We still print out a list for our pickers as well so they can read more descriptions, but the RF gun will lead them up and down the aisles, picking from both

*The Solution continued:*

sides of the aisles as they go through the warehouse, picking 10 to 20 full pallets, whatever the order requires.”

The pickers scan the exact pallet that they are required to pick from, and they enter the quantity or confirm the picked quantity. If the product is not there, NCF has an inaccuracy. If they need to pick only nine out of the ten cases, they can enter a short pick. If the product is not there at all, they have the ability to look for an alternate location and fulfill the order that way as well with the same lot. “There’s a lot of neat things on the picking side that has made us a lot faster,” shared Krenselewski. “In the past, we would have to come back into an office and look up another location on the computer, whereas now we can do it on the fly.”

John Winkel, Programmer Analyst at NCF, is responsible for taking information that’s available in the S2K

Analytics software and presenting that information to NCF’s user community. They can then analyze the data themselves and get the information that they need out of the system. Using S2K Analytics, Winkel creates a multitude of reports for different reasons. “I have sales by month along with the previous year’s issue comparisons of sales, sales by sales rep, by vendor, and just about any type of sales analysis that you can do I’ve created using the S2K analytics tool,” said Winkel. “It’s a very flexible system, it’s powerful, and you can use it for basic stuff, but you can also get very detailed graphs and reports that are available to our users.”

When a new product comes in, it is first developed and then determined to be a food service or a retail item. S2K Analytics pulls the report for items that had been received over the past week. NCF utilizes S2K to create that bill of material. Following the bill of material creation, the software creates the manufacturing order, which then goes through NCF’s compliance and labeling and then to the floor. S2K picks and pulls the product, the base component products that need to be manufactured, and put away from the manufactured items.

## The Results

“Working with the VAI team on the implementation process was smooth,” said Tim Pike, Purchasing Manager at NCF. “The guys over at VAI were always knowledgeable, could relate to our problems, and come up with solutions to help better our processes and our system here at Natural Choice Foods.”

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

- Print reports in 5.1 seconds vs. 10-20 minutes with previous system
- Boost the WMS fulfillment process from the previous 96% to 99.5%
- See all information that’s needed, including pictures, with a click of button
- Collaborate between VAI and NCF to develop ideas that will improve NCF’s system and procedures

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