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VAI
INDUSTRY ERP
WITHOUT LIMITS

The Company

Celebrating over 30 years in business, AVA Companies is an importer, distributor, and manufacturer of protein products. AVA specializes in the manufacture of modified atmosphere products, packaging meat products in styrofoam trays and presenting it as if it was manufactured at the store. AVA's customers range from small butcher shops to retailers like Walmart, and many others in between. The company began in 1985 with two employees and today has 272 associates working for the company.

Industry
Wholesale Distribution, Manufacturing, Importer, Food & Beverage

Requirements
Cloud, WMS, Lot Tracking, Food Safety, Manufacturing

The Solution

"In the 30 years that we've been in business, we went from the Flintstones to the Jetsons," said Leonard Lombardi Jr., President at AVA. There were no real food safety protocols at the time that were mandated by the government. From then on, AVA developed into a SQF level 2 facility. "We took technology and it had stemmed all the way through the entire process," continued Lombardi Jr. "For example, with the platform that we run our software on, VAI S2K, we don't need to have servers in the place anymore. They're now done off-site in a cloud where the worry and the accountability are elsewhere. And we can concentrate on what we do best, which is the manufacture of our products."

Transitioning to VAI's cloud-based ERP platform has helped AVA from a stability standpoint. Where the company is located on Long Island, NY, power is not always stable. Prior to running VAI ERP in the cloud, any time there was a power blip, a surge, a thunderstorm, or too much wind, everything went down. The company may have been down for a couple of hours, or a couple of days. AVA always maintained power, but they had to reset the systems to get them back to operational. Now, with everything stored on VAI Cloud, if AVA has electricity, they have access to

their systems and data. Business continues as usual.

Said Luigi Delfini, Vice President at AVA, "Because AVA is a perishable business, company information changes hour to hour. Our product does not last long, so having that data right there in front of us every minute of the day, knowing that it's accurate, and knowing that it's changing as the business is changing has been very important."

At AVA, orders come in electronically via the EDI system for customers such as Wakefern, Walmart, Shaw's, and Save-A-Lot. Those orders get transmitted into the VAI S2K system. Another way the company receives orders is electronically via email, which are hand keyed directly into S2K. "I run reports all the time in S2K, such as inventory management, manual work orders, and sales analysis reports," said Angela Wehrman, Account Manager at AVA. "I can have a customer call me and tell me they'd like to run a feature on a particular item, say a bone-in chuck steak, and inquire what the sales were for the past six months on that product. Or they would like to know how many grinds of Laura's Lean they had sold from the months May through June. I can run that report and then send it to the customer."

AVA has implemented VAI's

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The Solution continued:

Warehouse Management System (WMS). They use the software to receive, bill, and pick orders, plus use the lot control feature. The system also gives AVA the ability to recall and if there is a product recall, they know where they sent it and how to bring it back. "For the food industry, this is one of the most important processes you can have," said Domenic Capul, Vice President at AVA.

When the truck arrives with products, AVA collects the driver's documentation and verifies in the system that a purchase order is in place and that no one is delivering what they did not order. Said Capul, "We then schedule the purchase order on our dock at that point, after it has been validated. Every item on the purchase order

is then printed with a pallet label. I'll get a tie high, quantity, item number, and item description from it. It will instruct me on how to bring this product into the building so everything stays consistent."

Once that process is complete, AVA unloads the truck, and brings the products into the building where they break down, palletize, and label the items. They can now scan those created pallet tags so that each item has a pallet number. When items are put away, they have the location. S2K then provides a screen that's called bin analysis.

The system provides the ability to look up any location and see what's in the location. It also has an item search feature. AVA can see dates, palettes, and lots – all from one screen. With lot tracking, AVA can perform a recall. Without that ability, any product recall would require a recall of everything which can put AVA out

of business. The tracking of lots is important for the Safe Quality Food (SQF) program because it's a requirement of SQF. Said Capul, "When you get an audit, they make you do a recall, and you must be able to prove your process. Without that, we wouldn't be able to prove the process and it's an automatic failure."

In the manufacturing process, S2K helps AVA handle the inventory going into and coming out of their manufacturing and helps them control the cost of goods going into the work–in–progress (WIP) manufacturing process. Once products are moved into WIP, they come out of inventory and that lot comes out of inventory. Said Capul, "We have reporting, and we know what we sent in and when it's coming out. A new lot is created with new pack dates, so we know it came out. We have weight and dollars going into and out of production."

The Results

As the processes became more automated and more accurate, fewer layers of people are needed to check and recheck data, and to do some of the automated processes like invoicing. Said Luigi Delfini, Vice President at AVA. "Whereas you might

have needed five to six people to get an order out of the building because everything had to be entered manually. The VAI system does it for us now."

According to Capul, working with VAI has been a pleasure because VAI is an independently owned company. "They are people who

care about us. If I ever had an issue when we first went live – I called 12 o'clock at night, 1 o'clock in the morning – I had my call answered. I'm not sent to a call center. I'm not sent to wait. It's taken care of right then and there. And that's probably the most important thing for any company, is support."

The Result continued:

Concluded Lombardi Jr., "The benefit of having our processes running through the VAI Cloud is that we're able to increase employee efficiency, and make our processes for our associates more user-friendly, so that gives the customer a better experience with us. It lets us produce a product, deliver it accurately, know where it is at any one given time, and most importantly, it lets us concentrate on what we're in business to do, is the manufacture of product."

Since the launch, AVA Companies has been using VAI's ERP software to:

- Achieve business continuity and worry-free operations with cloud computing
- Receive, bill, and pick orders, plus use the lot control feature
- See dates, palettes, and lots – all from one screen
- Automate processes like invoicing, reducing manual workload
- Concentrate on product manufacturing rather than running servers

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– Leonard Lombardi Jr., President at AVA Companies