

Hillcrest Foods | Powered by VAI



The Company

Hillcrest Foods is a wholesale distributor of bakery ingredients, dairy products, specialty items, gourmet food products, and disposables. Headquartered in Saratoga Springs, New York, Hillcrest delivers to bakeries, co-ops, industrial food processors, restaurants, and pizzerias throughout the Northeast. Originally started in Vermont, the company also covers New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, New York State, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Hillcrest also does some distribution to other outlying states, with its customer base the small bakery or the restaurant cafe with a bakery inside.

Industry

Wholesale Distribution, Durable Goods, Food

Requirements

S2K Food Software, Route Manager, Warehouse Management, Financial Management, Manufacturing Management

The Solution

In recent years, Hillcrest has taken on an additional customer base of manufacturers, with a finished product for retail or sold to other bakeries, restaurants, distributors, or companies such as Whole Foods and Fresh Market. Inventory has always been a big challenge for Hillcrest Foods. Companies in the food distribution business must find the balance between having enough, but not excess, because of expiration and best buy dates.

When you're carrying 3,000 to 4,000 items, it's difficult to maintain all of it in a timely manner and then get all that information to whoever needs it, whether it's purchasing or sales. Using VAI S2K Enterprise for Food software, Hillcrest can pull reports on short, dated items and it allows them that amount of time to try to sell it out before it gets to that date.

"That's big in the food distribution area," said Steven Deuso, Warehouse Manager at Hillcrest Foods. "As far as recalls go, the VAI software does exactly what we need it to do, which we take a step further and have lot numbers printed on the invoices. Our manufacturer customers require that for their USDA requirements."

At Hillcrest, orders come in via phone for the most part. Orders are placed and processed, whether it be on a route which may have a specific deadline, or it may

be a customer who's coming for a pickup, or a will call at the company's location. In Hillcrest's previous system, truck mapping was entirely manual; each order required a look at each paper, which had to be matched with the appropriate paper. They can now simply drag and drop at various stops, and then onto the truck. The company can now Route Manage in half the time it used to take, which was twenty to thirty minutes before VAI.

By the time it reaches Steven Deuso, Warehouse Manager at Hillcrest Foods, the Route Manager has been edited, sorted, and proofed. The truck's total weight is the first thing Deuso checks to make sure the trailers fit in. Said Deuso, "We weigh the truck before cubing it out since we sell a lot of bagged goods. After making the necessary adjustments, I construct my pallets, which is my unit, to function. After that, I palletize it in a truck mapping tool, take this stop, combine it with that stop, and this stop meets at that stop. Once I have proofed that, I print off a load sheet for our loaders to use at the end of the night to make sure that everything's on there. I send it back to the S2K system and print out those unit of works from the route manager, and once it goes through that part of it, it's released to the gun so my selectors can grab their labels and go."



The Solution continued:

According to Chris Barkyoub, President of Hillcrest Foods, everything is working according to plan with VAI’s warehouse solution that includes RF guns. Staff training takes less time because the gun indicates every motion that needs to be made. There has been a significant improvement as they simply follow the RF gun.

There are several applications that Hillcrest uses in VAI’s Financial Management, such as accounts receivable, accounts payable, and the general ledger. On

the rebate side, it’s automatic. The report is run, it’s sent into the general ledger, and Hillcrest can track it by vendor very easily, and on the same for the customer side as well. The software also includes workflow triggers, which Hillcrest uses daily for customers who are placed on hold resulting in past due or over the credit limit status. The workflow trigger stops their order from being processed and it gives Hillcrest a chance to call the customer and get their accounts receivable situation straightened out.

“One of the great things about VAI S2K is the ability to connect external documents that are required for all our items to the VAI system,” said

Kris Dubrey, Office Manager at Hillcrest Foods. “We can do an item inquiry, pull up an item, and look with a click of a button to see if our external storage drive holds all the documents that we need for our customer.”

The company makes extensive use of the VAI manufacturing software since it is necessary to have the certificate of origin, kosher paperwork, and requirements for labeling. To make a sale, Hillcrest must deliver these requirements quickly. They can now accomplish that with a single click thanks to VAI’s food solution, when previously they had to juggle things from several locations.

The Results

“The VAI S2K system is much better at looking up information,” said Chris Barkyoub, President at Hillcrest Foods. “We don’t have to search through files to discover invoices, which can be emailed immediately

from S2K. Our accounting staff think it’s faster and smoother and there’s been a lot of improvements.”

Since the launch, Hillcrest Foods has been using VAI’s ERP Food software to:

- Reduce warehouse staff training

- Improve warehouse functions
- Provide personalized customer service
- Manage routes in half the time
- Optimize the sales process with one single click

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