

Snow Brand Australia milks existing IBM software investment for all it's worth

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

A manufacturer and exporter of dairy products, such as brie and camembert cheeses and infant milk formula, Snow Brand Australia found it difficult to coordinate information across locations in Melbourne, rural Victoria and rural New South Wales. It wanted to streamline business processes and make it easier to meet regulatory compliance needs.

■ **The Solution**

Working with existing business partner Coordimax, Snow Brand implemented a range of Coordimax's information management modules over three years. Coordimax's Customer Relationship Management, Document Management, Human Resources and Quality Assurance applications leveraged Snow Brand's existing infrastructure based on IBM software.

■ **The Benefits**

The Coordimax information management modules have allowed Snow Brand to formalise and automate processes such as sales lead generation, quality assurance, leave management and training management. They have given staff a centralised, searchable repository for vital documents and ensure the information is always current across all three sites.



About Snow Brand Australia

Snow Brand Australia is a manufacturer and exporter of dairy products headquartered in Southbank, Victoria. It produces camembert and brie cheeses in Nowra, New South Wales, which are sold under the Unicorn Cheese label. It also makes infant milk formula in Tatura, Victoria, which is exported to Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. Snow Brand Australia is a subsidiary of Snow Brand Milk Products in Tokyo, Japan.

Central information store needed for efficiency and compliance

With a history dating back to 1925, Snow Brand Milk Products is one of Japan's leading manufacturers of dairy products and infant milk formula. Its Australian subsidiary has been operating since 1990 and now has three facilities in Australia: an export management company in inner-city Southbank, Victoria; a cheese manufacturing plant in Nowra, New South Wales; and an infant milk plant in Tatura, Victoria.

By 2002, the company was finding it difficult to maintain consistent records between these three locations and staff who regularly travelled between sites could not easily access the information they needed to work.

“We were keeping different copies of data in three locations and we decided we needed a way to centralise critical corporate information. We were also looking for ways to streamline our business processes and help us work more efficiently.”

– Gary Tong, General Manager, Snow Brand Australia

As a manufacturer and exporter, Snow Brand Australia has a large number of compliance requirements, which generate large volumes of paperwork. The company has to meet Australian and international food quality standards for manufacturing. It is also required to retain export documentation for the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), which can be called upon several years later for auditing purposes.

“We had been using IBM groupware and collaboration software for many years, so it made sense to use a system that would work with our existing infrastructure.”

– Gary Tong, General Manager, Snow Brand Australia

Coordimax delivers information management on IBM platform

IBM Business Partner Coordimax was already working with Snow Brand Australia, providing management services for the manufacturer's collaboration software. Snow Brand decided to implement several modules from Coordimax's range of information management applications, powered by IBM software.

Coordimax offers an integrated suite of software applications designed to automate business processes, capture data and transform it for effective management decision making. Coordimax is flexible and can be customised to specific needs. The analysis and reporting tools provide users with instant data analysis that can be exported into normal office applications.

In 2002, Coordimax and Snow Brand implemented the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Document Management modules.

Coordimax CRM provided a central repository to track business dealings with the company's customers and suppliers. This system gives staff working from any of Snow Brand's three locations access to contact information and a complete history of the company's interactions with each business partner.

With Coordimax Document Management, Snow Brand can store all incoming and outgoing correspondence, even scanned copies of paper documents. These documents are quickly and seamlessly replicated from one site to another, ensuring all staff are working on the most up-to-date material.

Following the success of these applications, in 2005 Snow Brand implemented Coordimax's Human Resources and Quality Assurance modules.

Coordimax Human Resources gives Snow Brand a detailed, accurate and auditable central repository of employee information, including performance management and training management.

Coordimax Quality Assurance gives Snow Brand document approval cycles, revision control and comprehensive auditor and modifier tracking for all quality policies and procedures. Snow Brand uses Coordimax's quality improvement reports and change request facilities to manage its evolving quality assurance needs.

“As always, Coordimax manages our entire IT environment,” said Tong. “For a company with limited technology resources, this gives us peace of mind.”

“Coordimax went through with us to help translate our business processes and rules into their framework. Every company's processes are a little bit different and Coordimax were very patient in ensuring they had everything the way we wanted it.”

– Gary Tong, General Manager, Snow Brand Australia

Productivity improvements like chalk and cheese

The Coordimax information management modules allowed Snow Brand to leverage its existing investments in IBM software and build on the framework already in place.

“Our users are already familiar with the IBM environment so we didn’t need to train them how to use the new software. It also allowed us to have a single company maintaining our IT infrastructure, which allows us to focus on manufacturing, exporting and selling our products.”

– Gary Tong, General Manager, Snow Brand Australia

Coordimax CRM has allowed Snow Brand to construct action workflows, ensuring sales opportunities are followed up quickly and efficiently. The system also allows Snow Brand staff to project sales income for the coming month, quarter or year and easily create mail-out and event listings.

Coordimax Document Management gave Snow Brand a single place to maintain all corporate information including corporate policies and procedures. Staff no longer have to worry about synchronising documents between sites or working with out-of-date information. The company has granular control over who can create, view and edit which documents based on their role in the company.

“We keep scanned copies of export documentation on the system for AQIS audits, which means we don’t have to keep paper,” said Tong. “It saves us a lot of space in filing cabinets and makes it easy to find the documents we need if have to respond to a query or audit.”

Similarly, Coordimax’s Quality Assurance module provided a company-wide, searchable place to store quality management documentation. It has configurable security, access control levels and auditing to protect the integrity of key documents.

Finally, Coordimax Human Resources helped Snow Brand automate and formalise processes such as leave calculations, performance management and training management. It is integrated with the company’s payroll systems, allowing employees to query their pay, outstanding leave and other basic functions using the same client software they use for email.

“We don’t have a dollar figure, but we know just from working day to day how much these information management systems have made our company more efficient,” said Tong. “It has saved us countless hours of clerical time and made it much easier to find important documents.

“Even more important, it gives us a way to capture knowledge and make sure it stays in the company even if staff leave. We can retain and build on that business know-how.”

– Gary Tong, General Manager, Snow Brand Australia

For more information

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