



How ABM can help your food manufacturing business succeed

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Food manufacturing is an industry that requires coordinating a lot of moving parts. From managing production runs, to customer ordering and delivery, modern food manufacturing is as far from the lemonade-stand-on-the-street model as it's ever been. Keeping up requires powerful management software - and that's exactly what Advanced Business Manager (ABM) is.

What makes ABM different is that it's a true end-to-end solution; from accounting and orders to production and stock management, ABM is an integrated package that can manage almost all aspects of your business. Starting from the core accounting system, ABM can be built up into a custom software solution tailored to the needs of your business.



Manufacturing

The most important part of food manufacturing is actually making the product. ABM's manufacturing module has many features that make this process all the more manageable.

Supply analysis and forecasting, for example, allows you to plan for the differences in supplier's lead times. As ABM's Managing Director Chris Heysen explains:

"If you've got a planned production run of so many batches over a time period - say, a few months - you need to know when to order the components. Some of the ingredients might come locally, so that could be a two or three day turn around. But others might be imported and be on a two month turn around - so you need to be able to analyse that and know when to order each ingredient."

Yet how do you know how much ingredients inventory you need to order? That depends on the volume you need to produce, which in turn relies on how much clients will order. ABM's demand analysis features can help. They allow you to analyse all the orders that have been

placed in the past and identify patterns. Seasonal trends for the industry as well as ordering quirks of individual clients can all be discovered.

Another thing food manufacturers need to know is what their production runs are costing. This can be done with ABM's recipes feature. Custom recipes can be created each with different stages for different parts of the process. You can see the forecasted cost of each stage as well as the final product, and then compare this with the actual outcome, allowing you to further refine your pricing models.

Recipes provide traceability too. Should a product recall be required, it's easy to see which batches have been affected by the offending ingredient, saving you recalling an entire product.



Warehousing

While manufacturing might be the bread and butter of producing food products, there are many ancillary activities businesses need to master to be successful. One of these is warehouse and stock management.

ABM's warehousing module allows for efficiency gains in the way stock and inventory are managed. You can create a hierarchical structure with multiple aisles and levels.

This is important when many of the items used to manufacture your product are perishable and have different use-by dates.

When inventory ingredients arrive at the warehouse, they can be scanned into the stock database. From there, things like location in the warehouse and use-by dates are stored, for easy retrieval whenever they're needed.



Most useful for food manufacturers is the ability to track when certain inventory elements have entered the warehouse.



Orders and Deliveries

Businesses also need to manage their ordering and delivery systems. ABM has this covered, with the ability for clients to order via a web portal and for you to manage your delivery runs.

ABM supports electronic data interchange (EDI) for big clients like supermarkets. This allows for much of the ordering process to happen electronically and without the direct supervision of an employee.

By automating some of the ordering process, less time is spent verifying and handling client orders. Instead, the order requests are checked against the stock levels recorded by ABM automatically. Yet for some clients, this solution might not be the best option. As Chris explains,

"For smaller clients like restaurants or delicatessens that can tend to operate all hours - 24/7 in many cases - orders could come in the middle of the night.

So instead of waiting for a sales rep to come around, we offer easy ordering for people that are ordering out of hours,

over the web. It's often a browser based solution; the client would have their usual order list and tick off what they want. It makes ordering very simple."

ABM can handle the next stage too - delivery. Many food manufacturers will have multiple vans running deliveries throughout the day, all in different directions. ABM's run management tool allows vans to be loaded according to the correct run and the correct customers.

"In food, when you're dealing with fresh products and use-by dates, you have to almost have daily deliveries. It's important to manage those deliveries right."

Is ABM the end-to-end solution you've been looking for?

There are, of course, other products out there that can handle elements of what ABM can do. But using them in your business is like trying to put together a puzzle where none of the pieces came from the same box.

With ABM, we have developed the whole software package. As a result, the puzzle fits together perfectly. This means fewer compatibility headaches for you and only one company to deal with for product support.

Yet however powerful ABM may be, every business is different - for yours, some features will be more valuable than others. The best way to see them in action is to request a no-obligation product demo. One of our specialists will listen to your requirements and walk you through the software, highlighting those features most useful for your business.

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