



TREEHOUSE FOODS

Data al dente

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Finding good information fast was a real challenge... Now there's no more laborious digging for essential data elements. It's so user-friendly, we now have other departments asking for access to the system.

Jayne Hoover
Vice President of Quality and R&D
American Italian Pasta Company

Global food producer reduces database management and information request time on average by 50 percent with help from Aras and PSC Group.

To say that Jayne Hoover knows pasta is a bit of an understatement. From lesser-known shapes like acini di peppe (tiny beads) to perennial world favorite, ziti, Hoover and her team support the production of over 2 million pounds of pasta per day at TreeHouse Foods's American Italian Pasta Company (AIPC).

As vice president of quality, research and development for AIPC, Hoover and her colleagues must account for the high quality production of every noodle. With private label customers and numerous brands worldwide, TreeHouse Foods AIPC has dozens of product and customer-specific variables to track - ingredients, formulas, product and package specifications, certifications, and quality documents - just to name a few.

Historically, this product and customer data had been maintained in different areas throughout the company, in a variety of spreadsheets and databases. Hoover knew there had to be a more scalable and efficient way.

“Finding good information fast was a real challenge,” she said. “With information in so many different places, we would spend a lot of time finding and extracting what we needed and then, in some cases, reformatting it for readability and reporting,” said Hoover. “Regulatory and consumer affairs also require regular audits and reporting and, at the time, those were time consuming to pull together.”

Hoover first started to make the case for more cohesive data systems when she first arrived. Her early independent research turned up numerous product lifecycle management (PLM) tools and systems. It was difficult to distinguish one from the other and vendors galore lined up to show their wares.

A Better Way

Hoover finally sat down with Darryl Poore, director of advisory services at PSC. Poore and the PSC team listened carefully as she described her vision and requirements for a master database system. Right from the beginning, she liked PSC's approach. PSC wouldn't make any PLM recommendations without first studying the situation and enterprise needs.

"Darryl and his team came in and interviewed people to understand what their needs were and why," Hoover said. "They didn't assume anything. I can't say enough good things about Darryl and PSC for that."

PSC set out to help AIPC manage customer complaints, formulations, specifications and customer quality documentation in less time, with less labor and in a way that no longer was a drain on productivity. AIPC chose Aras Innovator, a centralized Web-based PLM framework to organize and track the long list of variables and their relational values.

PSC developers leveraged Aras functionality to convert information once stored in spreadsheets, PDFs and Word documents into a complete and connected solution, easily accessible by anyone in the company, with the proper credentials.

Before the new system was in place, Hoover said that getting the correct and updated information would sometimes take days. Reports, snapshots and answers are now available in minutes.

"Now there's no more laborious digging for essential data elements. It's so user-friendly, we now have other departments asking for access to the system," said Hoover.

IT Upside

With IT systems and connectivity issues spanning the country and the world, Jeremy Vance and his team have also played a critical role in successfully executing the new master database plan. As director of technology infrastructure at AIPC, Vance has had to ensure that Internet connectivity, servers and network security were prepared for the required database conversions and upgrades.

Vance joined the project in time to see just enough of the old ways, and also play an important part in designing the new and improved system. He points to

the value being in the number of key groups using the system.

"We have everyone from sales to marketing, to finance and quality using the system and the efficiencies as a result are tremendous for productivity," said Vance. "The value of the Aras system goes up with each internal group that comes on board."

AIPC and PSC aren't stopping there. Plans for adding onto the Aras system are underway and greater efficiencies are yet to be realized. There is no time for resting on laurels when serving private label customers around the world.

Hoover and Vance are happy with the progress the whole company has made. Sitting back in her chair to gaze out her office window, Hoover searches for the right way to describe another unexpected benefit of the herculean project.

"Not only does it help us better serve our customers, it makes our people more productive and happier," said Hoover.

Productivity Enhancements Achieved:

- ▶ **Quality/R&D – Specifications Management**
 - 60% reduction in product information requests
 - From 11 hours to just under two hours for spec change-over requests
- ▶ **Marketing – Customer Complaints**
 - 40% reduction in time spent managing data
 - Increase in support activities for analysis & research
- ▶ **IT and Infrastructure – Customer Performance**
 - Enable a consistent single point of view for all KPIs across multiple levels
 - Eliminate four hours of report preparation per customer per week

About Aras

Aras® offers the best Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software for global businesses with complex products and processes. Advanced PLM platform technology makes Aras more scalable, flexible and resilient for the world's largest organizations, and a full set of applications provide complete functionality for companies of all sizes.

By rethinking the way PLM is designed, Aras has taken a fundamentally different approach with a focus on the Business of Engineering. Aras solutions support processes for global product development, systems engineering, multi-site manufacturing, supply chain, quality and more.

Companies running Aras include Airbus, Boeing, Bombardier, GE, Hitachi, Honda, Kawasaki, Magna, Microsoft, Motorola, Nissan, TOSHIBA, Xerox, the US Army and hundreds of others worldwide.



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