

Food Processor Streamlines Operations, Enhances Process Visibility to Expedite Expansion

About Evans Food Group

Evans Food Group Ltd. is a global producer of pork pellets and private label, co-packed, and branded pork rinds. Founded in 1932, this Chicago-based company has grown to be the world's leading producer of pork rinds and one of the largest Hispanic-owned businesses in the country. Snack products include pork skins, cracklins, sancochos, and pickled products. As a leading contract manufacturer for pork rinds and cracklins, Evans Food Group serves distributors, retailers and ethnic food companies strategically located across the world's markets, with a strong presence in North, Central and South America.

The business footprint for this engagement consisted of four manufacturing locations in the United States, in addition to Evans Food Group's headquarters location. The entire U.S. workforce was converted to the new solutions during the implementation.

Conducting a Current State Analysis

Management had tried to solve the company's growth challenges through ERP before. By the time they engaged with Ultra Consultants for the ERP selection process, they were considerably overdue for solution upgrades to meet customer demand and business growth. Ultra further uncovered these challenges and requirements during its current state analysis:

- **Recall and Traceability** – It is essential for food manufacturing companies to have solid steps in place to help with recall and traceability. While the company had always been strong in this area, Evans Food Group recognized the value of making further investments to stay on the cutting edge of food safety.
- **A Single Version of the Truth** – Food manufacturing companies need one reliable version of the truth. In past years, multiple Evans Food Group facilities were using different methods of measuring performance, analyzing the impact of changes and generating reports, including inefficient manual processes. To improve the situation, management realized they needed quicker access to more accurate data to help them make better and faster decisions.
- **Standardization** – Along with the need for better and more accessible data, the company also needed to standardize business processes across all locations and be able to access and report data within the same system. The goal was to streamline best practices and initiate common, standardized processes across all business locations.
- **Growth** – While Evans is currently the largest manufacturer of its kind in the United States, management wanted a solution that would enable the company to grow and consider potential future acquisitions.

At a Glance

Evans Food Group Ltd. partnered with Ultra Consultants to solve business process challenges and guide the identification, selection and implementation of a new technology solution.

The company was limited by multiple outdated legacy systems and a lack of standardized processes across business locations.

The processor sought a solution to enable growth through expansion and acquisitions.

Ultra helped drive transformation by developing a current state analysis and guided selection and implementation of new enterprise technology.



- **Elimination of Inefficiencies** – Process inefficiencies were rampant in several key processes. From production scheduling to financial reporting, there was too much duplication of effort and a reliance on manual data entry. This characteristic of their current state was directly impeding output
- **Production Planning** – Evans Food Group had traditionally planned production by flavor clean-out (e.g., from regular to BBQ), but those plans were complicated by changeovers on the bagging machines. Changing bag size was a time-consuming process and calculating the most efficient way of producing the required combinations of flavor and bag size was overwhelming. Evans needed a system that could juggle the competing priorities and maximize productivity and throughput.

Strategy and Deployment

The strategy was to deploy the new solution to the entire company in one business release across all locations. To ensure a robust solution that satisfied the business requirements across all location processes, a team of business process leads was identified with accountability across the enterprise.

In addition, a super-user structure was implemented to reduce implementation risk and lock-in future state process maturity.

To solve the problems the food producer was facing, it was important to thoroughly understand the company and its industry, including processes, culture and professional dynamic. Ultra Consultants led efforts to map out and analyze the company processes. Some were strong and only needed to be applied in a new solution. Others needed improvement. The team's familiarity with food industry best practices became invaluable in those cases.

"We knew that we needed an organization that understood the challenges growing food processors deal with every day. Ultra's experience was invaluable to us," commented Operations Manager David Sparesus.

The ERP team identified and selected an ERP solution with extensive industry-specific experience and out-of-the-box functionality Evans needed. Further, the ERP vendor added customized functionality specifically for Evans, including a more advanced yield reporting process. Evans needed inputs across multiple data sources including the base yield report and so the team developed a custom prototype tool.

The solution to Evans' challenging production line dilemma turned out to be manageable with features already part of the core software. Allergen management and auto-prioritization features were a perfect fit for the kind of multivariate decision-making the company engages in daily. The team simplified a major scheduling process with built-in features from the ERP solution.

Results and Benefits from a Proven Approach

Ultra's proven approach and methodologies in selection and evaluation, coupled with the selection of an industry-focused solution delivered a clear value-add for the implementation project. Some of the value drivers include the following.

- **Knowledge of food industry** – Working with a team knowledgeable in the food processing industry and selecting an appropriate technology platform meant the team and the technology vendor could quickly understand current state shop floor

Project Drivers:

-  Enhance Recall & Traceability
-  Improve Data Access
-  Gain a Single Version of the Truth
-  Standardize IT Systems
-  Gain Ability to Scale
-  Remove Manual Data Entry
-  Improve Production Planning

process conditions, apply best practices and collaborate to define a high value future state solution. This specific insight reduced the effort and time required to reach workable process designs.

- **Standardizing business processes** – By documenting the current and future states and establishing improved business processes, the project team gave Evans a repeatable blueprint for standard business solutions as the company acquires new business units. Onboarding new business units through acquisitions is now a manageable task. The company now has multi-plant management processes, technology sharing, continuous improvement and strategic planning across all plants and all parts of the business.

For example, Evans acquired a new business in the Fall of 2017 and brought it up and running on the ERP solution in a mere five months, which is an unheard-of, fast-tracked result. The company is considering other acquisitions and has asked Ultra Consultants to likewise train, onboard and deploy the business solutions in line with the new Evans footprint. These processes have set the stage to facilitate growth and expansion and assimilate new business faster.

- **Methodology** – The technology platform has a flexible methodology that was easily integrated into the Ultra implementation framework, allowing an efficient project governance approach and tactical flow.

Conclusion

Evans Food Group is now well on its way to having the kind of cross-organizational visibility and analytics it needs to take the company to the next level. Using the pre-defined process flows, documents and training resulting from Ultra's business process improvement steps, the company has its organizational blueprint to achieve continuous improvement and expand to meet its goals.

Evan's Food Group CFO, Craig Leese, shared his thoughts, "Working with Ultra Consultants on this ERP project has placed us in an improved strategic position as we continue to grow within and beyond our pork rind industry. Acquisitions are coming online with unprecedented short timelines. We're impressed."

Having already achieved status as the world's largest producer in their industry, leaders at the company expect their new technology solution will dramatically accelerate their already impressive growth.

About Ultra Consultants

Ultra Consultants is an independent research and enterprise solutions consulting firm serving the manufacturing and distribution industries throughout North America, as well as companies with global operations. Since 1994, Ultra has delivered enterprise technology expertise and process management to drive business performance improvement for our clients. More information on the company's services, leadership, industry verticals served, and software vendor relationships can be found at www.ultraconsultants.com.