

Chefwear Finds Perfect Fit with SYSPRO Software

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■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Chefwear

INDUSTRY

Apparel Manufacturing

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

40

THE CHALLENGE

- 7000 orders per month
- 10,000 customers worldwide
- Constant introduction of new lines
- Multi-site manufacturing
- Inefficient inventory tracking
- Limited forecasting tools

SOLUTION & SERVICES

- Fully integrated ERP
- Scalable to growth
- Job subcontracting abilities
- Inventory tracking functionality
- Additional purchasing controls
- Corporate and reseller support

THE BENEFITS

- Maximized inventory
- Faster order turnaround
- Improved customer service
- Total access to data
- Optimized use of capital
- Streamlined overall operations

■ The Company

Chefwear was founded in 1990 by company President, Chef Rochelle Huppin Fleck, on a simple premise: Chefs can be fashionable as well as comfortable while practicing their culinary skills. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America of Hyde Park, New York, and a renowned pastry chef, Fleck first applied her vision and creativity to the design of unique pants. As requests from the culinary community grew, she and husband Gary committed their talents and resources to growing the company.

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- Chris Kurn
IS Manager, Chefwear

Today, Chefwear prides itself on being the leading producer of stylish, trend-setting apparel for both professional and weekend chefs. Originally known for innovative pant designs and styles, Chefwear now markets the most recognized and respected line of culinary apparel appropriate for the kitchen, living room and, in fact, all the other rooms of the house. Located in Chicago, with a retail outlet store attached, the company continues to explore new markets and the product lines to satisfy them.

Chefwear clothing, which is marketed worldwide, includes a Premier line of chef jackets featuring the newest Regal Jacket, which is made of 100% royal fine line six-ounce cotton twill, and a full line of five-star, four-star, and three-star jackets; various styles of aprons, shirts, headwear, shoes and accessories; and a wide variety of children's clothing.

■ The Challenge

In 1997, with sales increasing exponentially, Chefwear management realized that new, more robust software was needed to handle sales growth while maintaining the highest levels of customer service. The firm had been running SBT and Telemagic, but the need to better utilize capital and bring inventory in line with customer demands forced the firm to undertake a search for a new software solution.

■ The Solution

Subsequently, the company determined that SYSPRO software more than met the company's need for more stringent controls. A further consideration was that the scalability of the SYSPRO solution would enable the solution to grow with the company. Working with local SYSPRO reseller, Business Technology Partners, Chefwear installed the SYSPRO software on top of a Dell Server and Microsoft Windows 2000 to accommodate 32 users.



■ The Result

According to Chris Kurn, Chefwear Information Systems Manager, the selection of SYSPRO has served the company well. With three manufacturing locations and one warehouse to serve approximately 10,000 worldwide customers, the software enables Chefwear to easily accommodate more than 7,000 orders per month. Because each of Chefwear's garments has its own unique set of patterns, the company cannot benefit from the use of common pieces. Therefore, when an order is received, the SYSPRO software creates a job that includes subcontracting operations. Purchase orders are created against these operations and kits are issued for each job, enabling the garment pieces to be cut and assembled. The streamlined process adds the additional levels of inventory and purchasing controls the company desperately sought.

Chefwear is faced with an added complexity, i.e., what sizes of its clothing to keep in stock in order to be able to accommodate orders. The company offers the following sizes for 99% of its clothes: XS, S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X, 4X, 5X. To maximize inventory levels, the company uses the SYSPRO software to accurately forecast the correct sizes and maintains appropriate inventory levels accordingly. As one would expect, Chefwear holds only small levels of its 4X and 5X sized products in stock.

How has the SYSPRO software helped the company to compete? Kurn leaves no doubt that it has enabled the company to maintain realistic inventory levels while, at the same time, speeding order turnaround and promoting better customer service. "The software gives us faster access to data, which, in turn, enables us to provide better customer service to our customers," he says.