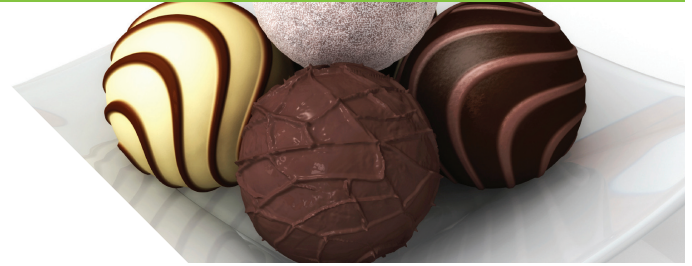


Daprano Delivers Sweet Service with SYSPRO

SYSPRO helps Daprano manage the seasonal nature of their business by giving them a clear and accurate window into their history, enabling them to properly forecast sales and plan accordingly.



■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Daprano & Company

INDUSTRY

Specialty Foods Distributor

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

6

THE CHALLENGE

- 21 unique product lines
- Imports from 6 countries
- Inaccurate inventory tracking
- 5- to 7-day delays in delivery
- Inefficient invoicing capabilities
- Stifled customer service

SOLUTION & SERVICES

- Inventory control functionality
- Automated invoicing
- Integrated ordering processes
- Easy-to-use system
- Real-time view of operations
- Affordable solution

THE BENEFITS

- Accurate inventory tracking
- Faster turnaround
- Efficient process management
- Same-day order shipment
- Superior customer service
- Industry recognition

Daprano & Company
Foods of Distinction

■ The Company

When Mick Sidari was looking to buy Daprano & Company in 2003, he wanted to bring something extra special to the specialty food business. The company was an importer and distributor of premium specialty chocolates, candies and cakes from all over the world, and Sidari recognized the potential for Daprano to become a major player in the specialty food industry. Armed with an extensive background in premium food products and a passion for quality, Sidari knew that taking Daprano to the next level meant giving it a service facelift.

“The company had some really nice product, and I thought if I could improve the service and freshness of goods, that volume would increase and it would drive the overall revenue,” Sidari says. He knew the place to start was at the base of operations. Daprano needed to streamline the purchasing, invoicing and selling processes, as well as get control of their delectable inventory.

“It is great to be recognized as a solid supplier,” admits Sidari. “And that all goes back to inventory control, ordering processes and service, which is where the SYSPRO system helps out.”

- Mick Sidari
Owner, Daprano & CO

Daprano carries a long list of elegant treats from across the sugar-coated globe. The Charlotte, North Carolina-based company sources 21 different lines of specialty foods from six different countries. Specifically, says Sidari, “We’re known for Italian chocolates. We have some of the best chocolates in the United States, coming straight from Torino.” Other big sellers are the Australian Jila gum and mints and fine Italian pastilles.

Daprano’s sophisticated victuals are on the shelves in high-end stores throughout the country. The company markets through a national network of specialty food brokers, as well as at various specialty-food trade shows annually. Most of the sales take place between the Daprano website, third-party catalogs and the brokers themselves.

■ The Challenge

When Sidari bought the company, he was told that one of the challenges was going to be keeping track of inventory and actually ordering the products from the suppliers. “The previous owner had a lot of trouble with the orders – he regularly had a 5- to 7-day lag and was usually carrying a disproportionate amount in back orders,” he says. Immediately, he looked at changing the software, thinking that it must have not been the right fit for the business and was causing some of the drag. Daprano had been using SYSPRO ERP, and Sidari figured that was part of the problem. “I take pride in my service,” he declares, “and when I bought the company I wanted to fix it.” So he began looking for a replacement system.



■ The Solution

However, he continued to use SYSPRO in the meantime, and after about 9 months Sidari realized it actually did have the tools to improve the day-to-day operations, such as managing ordering and inventory, and that maybe they weren't being applied properly in the past. "Very quickly, I realized that SYSPRO could satisfy the business's needs," he recalls. "I decided SYSPRO would be the answer for my business, and I decided to stay with it." Today, the six-person company runs a four-user system on Windows XP.

As opposed to a manufacturer, a distributor like Daprano need not be concerned with the entire manufacturing-specific ERP suite. Rather, says Sidari, they use the software for basic day-to-day functions such as purchase orders, buying, inventory control, invoicing and tracking sales history.

■ The Result

One of the undisputed features of the specialty food industry, whether a company is a manufacturer or distributor, is that business tends to be seasonal. "It's usually 4th quarter business," explains Sidari, "and most of it is gift-giving. Think of it from a consumer's perspective: if you gave a gift this year, you may not necessarily want to give the same gift the next year. So, over 50% of the product offerings change each year to satisfy the consumers' ever-changing needs." In this business of irregular sales patterns, having accurate history is critical to a company's ability to project into the future, as they have one shot – that famed 4th quarter – to bring in the majority of the year's revenue. SYSPRO helps Daprano manage the seasonal nature of their business by giving them a clear and accurate window into their history, enabling them to properly forecast sales and plan accordingly.

The best offense against such heavily lopsided market share, then, is superior customer service, Sidari's specialty. He understands that by having total control over and visibility into its inventory, Daprano always knows exactly what it has on hand and what it needs to fulfill expected demand in the upcoming period. With precision like that, he says, "If you place an order on an everyday item, and you place an order before 2 o'clock, it goes out the same day."

That kind of customer service has not gone unnoticed in the industry. One of Daprano's brokers recently pulled Sidari aside to share with him some encouraging feedback. "He told me, 'Every time I make a sale, one of the selling points to Daprano is service. You can't believe how good the service is from Daprano!' That was great to hear," he says. "Some of our larger customers have shared these same accolades with us. These successes have led to customer partnerships and business expansion in the last 24 months. It is great to be recognized as a solid supplier," admits Sidari. "And that all goes back to inventory control, ordering processes and service, which is where the SYSPRO system helps out."

Sidari has helped lead Daprano to reaching its first goal, which was to turn around customer service. That achievement will no doubt play a major role in accomplishing their next mission – to be one of the most recognized top-tier specialty food suppliers in the U.S.