

AJEMEX

Food Safety through Quality Management

*Success
Story*

Situation

Founded in Peru over 15 years ago, AJEGROUP is a Latin American beverage company with a commitment to size, taste, and quality at a fair price. In 2002, AJEGROUP began production under the name AJEMEX in Huejotzingo Puebla, Mexico. By 2007, plants were operating in three other Mexican cities: Monterrey, Guadalajara, and Villahermosa.

In 2006, AJEMEX set out to become the first Mexican business to achieve ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 22000:2005 certification. In order to do so, it recognized a need for a systematic approach to managing a variety of health, safety, and quality standards.

Choosing Qualtrax

AJEMEX evaluated three software packages considering the number of employees who would require access to the system, the various standards that would need to be managed, and the products' document revision control capabilities. A cross-functional team, led by the Technology and Quality Director and including members from Information Technology (IT), Continuous Improvement, and Purchasing, also examined user friendliness and ability to integrate with other software. The team chose Qualtrax to satisfy its needs and pursue ISO certification.

AJEMEX



A Learning Organization

AJEMEX implemented Qualtrax as a central information repository and idea sharing platform for all of its plant locations. AJEMEX uses Qualtrax to manage its quality manual, work instructions and procedures, and quality records as required by ISO standards. It also stores training documents, employee manuals, instructional videos, and external reference materials within Qualtrax.

"Qualtrax is an invaluable training tool," said Miguel Casas, AJEMEX Quality Manager. "Employees can learn a new procedure or even a new position very quickly using this system." By maintaining all job-related documentation in Qualtrax, AJEMEX saves time during training and internal process audits.



Ensuring Food Safety

With the large number of food safety requirements set forth by ISO, government agencies, and its customers, AJEMEX maintains its HACCP plan, food safety procedures, and all handling processes in Qualtrax. “Qualtrax greatly simplifies our audits, reducing preparation and length of audits,” comments Casas. Regulatory documentation and records are easily accessible by employees across all plants. AJEMEX also tracks ingredients and production activities for each batch of final product. Reports of all processes are generated within Qualtrax and reviewed monthly.

Continuous Improvement Methodology

In order to maintain a business culture of continuous improvement, AJEMEX developed its own methodology: a hybrid of lean manufacturing principles, good manufacturing practices, environmental guidelines, and safety and hygiene management. The company uses Qualtrax to monitor and record improvements by utilizing workflows for nonconformances, internal audits, and Kaizen events. The resulting process changes are then documented and implemented across all facilities.

Management performs an entire system review every six months. During these reviews, improvements are discussed and evaluated. Using the information recorded in Qualtrax, management is able to justify or modify company objectives, resource requests, etc. It can also assess the effectiveness of the overall improvement methodology.

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Miguel Casas, Quality Manager

Effects of Qualtrax on the Organization

The successful implementation of Qualtrax at AJEMEX first led to its ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 certification. Beyond that, AJEMEX is reaping the benefits of more timely communication regarding improvement efforts company-wide, a virtually paperless work system, and a single point of reference for important information.

“Whenever we make purchasing decisions, ROI (return on investment) is one of the first things we consider,” said Mr. Casas. “We estimate that the investment made in Qualtrax was recovered within 11 months of use. AJEMEX strongly recommends Qualtrax to improve control over business processes while saving time and money.”

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