

Handy International

Producing Quality Seafood Products For More Than 100 Years

Situation

Handy International, the nation's oldest supplier of seafood products, including soft shell crabs, crab meat and crab cakes, imports most of the products it sells from 15 different global suppliers.

The methods the company used to manage this global chain were no longer sustainable and Handy was looking to change the way it organized and streamlined data collection and other critical business processes.

You can imagine the large volume of documentation that needs to be collected and organized, especially with operations and suppliers throughout southeast Asia. Each shipment includes commercial invoices, pack lists, temperature recorder data, date code lists, ISF forms, QC reports and more.

This seafood pioneer wanted to automate document collection and organize it for fast and easy access—a far cry from managing by hard copy, which led to missing documents and lost productivity.

Getting automated

Handy, based in Salisbury, Md., was among the first in the food service industry to implement Qualtrax. "After speaking with the Qualtrax team, they were able to better understand our business and translate Qualtrax's software capabilities into real solutions for our company," says Brendan Sweeny, Director of Operations. "It became apparent how we can improve critical business processes through the workflow engine in Qualtrax. Matched with the affordable price and the Qualtrax team's knowledge of the food industry, it was an easy decision to move forward."

"Information and document management was a huge driver in selecting Qualtrax," Brendan says. "The support team took us through the first training and helped us manipulate the software to do exactly what we need to get done," he explains. "They have also been very receptive of requests for additions to the software. Having a responsive support team like this helps us to configure the software to better meet our needs."

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Getting started

Once up and running, Handy quickly began seeing the value of Qualtrax.

“Our employees were able to stay informed of routine tasks and approvals, information was automatically filed, and we were working with fewer physical documents,” Brendan says. The company was also able to see the status of each workflow and quickly find paperwork for shipments more than a year old.

One of the primary objectives was to automate document collection and organize it within Qualtrax for fast and easy access when documents need to be recalled in the future. In the past, these documents were managed by hard copy, where they frequently experienced missing documents when looking for information.

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Now, Brendan says, Qualtrax enables all global locations to work with the same documents and ensure Handy facilities are notified of any changes with management approval. Handy is still in the early stage of Qualtrax implementation, but it’s using it more and more with its global production staff, which serves to bring the global organization closer together and enable processes to be run more efficiently.

“Information and document management was a huge driver, through both the Document Control and Workflow functions,” Brendan says. “By using Qualtrax, we are able to ensure the proper people are always informed of routine tasks and approvals, information is automatically filed, and we are working with less physical documents, whether around the corner or 12 time zones away. That enables us to access paperwork quickly without having to manage physical storage of documents. And we have the ability to see where each workflow sits in the process so the ball is never dropped in a process.”

Getting results

Qualtrax helps Handy to manage all shipment information and documentation, customer complaints, product disposal documentation, requested random QC checks, new product set-up, annual third party audit documents, annual HACCP plan collection, and new item requests. The company is also managing product specifications, recipes and packaging files.

“The primary result of Qualtrax has been to tie our overseas operation more into the U.S. operations by enabling us to work off of the same documents and information, and standardize processes among all our suppliers rather than emailing information back and forth in several different formats,” Brendan says.

Since starting, Handy has expanded the software into other divisions of the company, from product development and accounting to packaging development and quality control. “Although Qualtrax is marketed as compliance software,” he says, “it is really limitless in what it could be used for.”