

Success Story

Sage X3 wraps MLW Foods in efficiency

Popular manufacturer of Wong Wing Asian-inspired meals replaces SAP with Sage X3 and saves 30% annually

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Jacques Plante

CIO and CFO, MLW Foods



The challenge

The acquisition that led to formation of MLW Foods also left the company without an ERP application. It faced a tight-timeline to wean itself from the existing SAP application.



The solution

MLW Foods selected Sage X3 as its next-generation ERP application, trusting its robust process manufacturing capabilities and deep data analytics tools would keep the newly-formed entity at the top of its game.



The result

With its move to Sage X3, MLW Foods has elevated efficiency, driven down costs, and accelerated productivity throughout the enterprise.

- Saving 20-30% annually over the cost of SAP.
- Rapid on time, on budget implementation sped ROI.
- Additional savings result from access to data analytics and warehouse management tools.
- Hyper-accurate forecasting and planning cut backorders significantly.

Sage

Company
MLW Foods Inc.

Location
Montreal, Canada

Industry
Food Manufacturing

Sage Products
Sage X3
Sage Enterprise Intelligence

Aliments
MLW
Foods

About MLW Foods

MLW Foods Inc. is a privately held food company based in Montréal, Quebec and are leaders in the manufacturing, distribution and commercialization of a broad variety of frozen foods, including full course meals, soups, and appetizers.



MLW Foods Inc. may not (yet) be a household name, but its line of Wong Wing eggrolls most certainly is. Every major retailer in Canada carries the company's line of frozen Asian-inspired products, and consumers adore them. Constantly innovating, MLW Foods recently launched new flavors and products aimed at enticing an even larger following. While the Wong Wing name goes back 75 years, in 2021, the company was purchased from McCain Foods — ultimately leading to the formation of MLW Foods. As a result, MLW Foods would need to find and implement a replacement for the SAP ERP application McCain was using. That unexpectedly fortuitous series of events steered MLW Foods to Sage X3.

Merger turns up the heat

"We had very little time to make the move," recalls Jacques Plante, CFO and CIO for MLW Foods. "It felt a bit like jumping on a moving bus. Business couldn't stop, so we had to pick a product and a partner very carefully to be successful."

Jacques assembled a cross-functional team, and they began reviewing ERP options together. SAP, they felt, was overly complicated and too costly. Microsoft Dynamics 365 lacked some of the deep processing manufacturing MLW Foods needs. "Then we saw a demonstration of Sage X3 through a local Sage business partner," he explains. "We immediately had the confidence that this product and this partner were the ideal choice."

He adds, "I've read that Sage X3 is often considered a Tier 2 ERP, while SAP is considered Tier 1. In my opinion, Sage X3 delivers Tier 1 functionality when it's deployed and optimized as well as ours is."

Rapid implementation kickstarts savings

Under the Sage partner's experienced hand, the implementation proceeded quickly. The company elected to host Sage X3 on a virtual private server, which helped speed up the process and ensured broad yet secure accessibility. "We started with general ledger and payables first and then proceeded with the distribution and manufacturing components," Jacques says. "We were fully live in just ten months. The combination of our preparedness and knowing exactly what we wanted with the skill and expertise of our business partner made it happen."

In addition to wide user adoption across virtually every department in the enterprise, MLW Foods is saving money—and lots of it. "For us, Sage X3 is 20 to 30 percent less expensive to implement and maintain than SAP," Jacques says. "In addition, previously, we were paying for a separate warehouse management system and business intelligence application that we're now able to include with Sage X3. Our IT infrastructure costs are also lower, and we can use our internal IT resources in new, more strategic ways."

Sage



Through improved forecasting and supply chain management, MLW Foods has gone from over one million dollars in short shipments to just a few hundred today.

Accurate forecasting drives cost-saving efficiency

MLW Foods relies on its accurate forecasts to optimize production planning. Before the implementation of Sage X3, forecasting was an entirely manual process. Now, the company has complete visibility across its supply chain and can answer critical questions like “what,” “when,” and “how much” surrounding its purchase and production schedule.

MLW Food’s transition occurred during the pandemic, which presented the company with challenges and opportunities. People were eating at home more, which spiked demand, but ingredient costs soared, and supply chain challenges added to the complexities. Jacques credits Sage X3 for allowing the company to continue profitable growth throughout. “With Sage X3 and our analytics tools, we were able to identify trends early and respond immediately,” he says. “We have very precise data surrounding our profitability — and can look at that by customer and item. We can factor freight costs into every customer invoice, for example, so we know precisely what it costs us to sell this particular item to this specific customer.”

At transition, the company had a high number of short shipments. “Now, we have maybe a couple of hundred dollars in a week,” says Jacques. “Using Sage X3, we’re forecasting and producing accurately to the demand — which is good for inventory management and for our customers.”

Automated data collection removes manual touchpoints

The production lines at MLW Foods move quickly, and it’s essential to record each pallet leaving the line and affix them with compliant labels. The company’s Sage business partner optimized this process by leveraging Sage X3’s Automated Data Collection functionality. The solution matches the production line speed in recording production and printing labels — keeping everything running smoothly.

The move streamlines workflows, reduces data entry errors, and frees staff time for more strategic tasks. “Previously, we had too many manual processes,” explains Jacques. “We weren’t performing much scanning. Now we’re there. We’ve also implemented scanning for lot and inventory tracking and are in the process of eliminating paper-based processes across every department.”

Quality control at every step

Rigid quality control standards are essential for every food manufacturer, and MLW Foods takes its responsibility seriously. The company tests products multiple times during the production process, continuously tracking quality results while semi-finished or finished products are in the production process. MLW Foods’ Sage business partner configured Sage X3 to match its QC workflows.

“We’re able to track lots forward and backward and complete a test recall within 30 minutes,” Jacques notes. “It gives us tremendous confidence in our system and ensures we pass every audit.”

Harnessing data for strategic insights

MLW Foods harnesses the massive volume of business data that runs through Sage X3 using Sage Enterprise Intelligence (SEI), a powerful business intelligence platform that tightly integrates with Sage X3.



“With Sage X3, we stay out in front. I never feel like we’re playing catch-up. We have continuous access to the data we need to run the business in the most efficient, safe, and profitable way possible.”

Jacques Plante

CIO and CFO
MLW Foods

“We get access to amazing data with SEI,” says Jacques. “For example, we use it to track supplier cost variances in near real-time. Our buyers can zero in on specific, high-value items, like proteins, and jump on purchasing decisions when the price is optimal.”

The company also relies on SEI to notify staff about changes and variations in real-time. Through customized reports, dashboards, and KPIs, MLW Foods has a visual view and can drill down to view the data that matters most. “For example, we monitor customer payments daily so our sales team can react and respond,” Jacques adds. “We also track promotions by customers and freight by orders, allow us to perform a customer/product profitability and contribution margin.”

Another creative use of the application to monitor CO₂ consumption. The company uses CO₂ to freeze products quickly, and if staff sees the consumption level increase, they know to investigate the system for leaks. “Access to this information keeps us close to the action,” adds Jacques. “We have smart people who need smart tools like this to do their jobs even better.”

Staying out in front

Sage X3 provides MLW Foods with the tools and information it uses to make strategic, game-changing decisions. “With Sage X3, we stay out in front. I never feel like we’re playing catch-up. We have continuous access to the data we need to run the business in the most efficient, safe, and profitable way possible.”

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