

Server Products

Made2Manage® ERP

Buttering Up for Business



Back in 1949, Alfred Wickesberg noticed that movie theater operators needed an easy way to melt and serve butter for their freshly popped popcorn. His solution, built in the basement of an old flour mill in Menomonee Falls, WI, was the restaurant industry's first automatic butter warmer and dispenser that eventually launched Server Products Incorporated.

Today, Server Products is an industry-leading provider of innovative products for serving, dispensing and merchandising a wide variety of food products. With more than 10,000 customers in the fast food, convenience store, movie theater, and restaurant industries, it is highly likely you have encountered at least one of Server Products' dispensers, food warmers, servers or organizers—from dispensers at McDonalds, Dairy Queen, or Arby's, to the nacho equipment at your local gas station.

Taking a Family-Owned Business Into the Millennium

The family-owned Server Products was an early adopter of technology. In fact, the make-to-stock operation adopted its first business system in 1981 from a local vendor. Over a period of 17 years, the vendor visited Server Products weekly to perform maintenance and customizations. As Y2K approached, management at Server Products realized that they needed a lower maintenance—and subsequently less expensive—enterprise resource planning system that would carry the company into the future.

Once leaders at Server Products decided to abandon the heavily customized system the company had outgrown, they hired a consultant to assist in their new system selection. After eliminating two vendors that are today no longer in business, the selection team cast a unanimous vote for the Made2Manage Enterprise Business System.



ROI at a Glance:

Richfield, WI-based Server Products, an industry-leading provider of innovative products for serving, dispensing and merchandising a wide variety of food products, implemented the Made2Manage Enterprise Business System in 1998 and saw a number of business improvements, including:

- Improved data visibility and accessibility resulting in improved customer service.
- Financial stability in a volatile market with steady to increased sales over a seven-year period.
- Continued productivity levels in spite of staff reductions.
- Innovative reporting for overall better business management.
- Improved delivery times resulting from reliable back-office data and system scalability.

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— *Mike Wickesberg*, IT and IS Network Administrator, Server Products

Mike Wickesberg, IT and IS network administrator for Server Products, noted that their big-bang approach to the implementation of the Made2Manage application went smoothly. The company focused the implementation and education process around a core group of 15 employees, who then transferred knowledge to end users.

Seven Years of Success on an Extensible System

From its former system to the Made2Manage system, Server Products saw a number of improvements. Slowly, the company was able to transition from a make-to-stock operation to more of a make-to-order or mixed mode operation. For Wickesberg, the most notable return on investment included data visibility, accessibility and reporting. “In our old system, we could query on one field and one field alone,” said Wickesberg. “Today, we can find the information we need in seconds and that helps us better answer customer questions.”

Likewise, Wickesberg found that data within the Made2Manage application could be easily queried to meet unique business requirements. For example, Wickesberg designed a report called “Zpick!” to better select sales orders sent to shipping for picking and shipping. The report looks at the sales order line items and current inventory, examines customer requirements like “ship complete” or “credit status,” and utilizes the customer “want” dates to prioritize or hold future shipments. “While this is not a canned report, it goes to show the power of the Made2Manage application, and how it can help you accomplish your desired goal,” said Wickesberg.

Wickesberg noted that he has found significant value from the report exchange available on M2M Expert, Made2Manage Systems’ customer-focused Web site, within some of the user-to-user tools. The “Zwhere” report he downloaded has come in handy several times, allowing him to see multiple levels into Server Products’ bill of materials (BOM). The report finds parts where they exist on all of the BOMs sublevels, up to six levels deep. “Zwhere” shows Server Products, in one report, all sub-components, as well as all of the higher level items using those components.

Server Products also took advantage of improvements in bar coding and scheduling functionality from its previous system. From day one, the company utilized Made2Manage Systems’ bar coding functionality to streamline labor collection, as well as manage key material transactions including movement to inventory and from location to location. “We have more than 70 employees, and I don’t know how companies manage without bar coding,” said Wickesberg.

“I think what other Made2Manage customers need to understand is that they’re never done implementing technology. There are always ways to extend and improve the Made2Manage system. When we wanted to take advantage of the benefits that came with Made2Manage on the SQL database, Consona had services to ensure that the switch would be as smooth as possible.”

— *Mike Wickesberg*
IT and IS Network Administrator
Server Products

