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DAVE HARTWELL | SR. DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

Clif Bar & Company

Rapidly growing organic food manufacturer implements advanced supply chain automation and enhances sustainability with RFgen Mobile Foundations for Oracle’s JD Edwards.

At a glance...

Industry

Food & Beverage

Application

Purchase Order
Processing

Inventory Management

License Plating

Manufacturing

Environment

Oracle’s JD Edwards
EnterpriseOne 9.2

The Challenge

Clif Bar & Company is a leading maker of organic energy bars, including the CLIF®, LUNA®, and CLIF Kid® product lines. The employee and family-owned company endeavors “to run a different kind of company: the kind of place we’d want to work at, that makes the food we’d like to eat, and that strives for a healthier, more sustainable world—the kind of world we’d like to pass on to our children.”

Until 2016, Clif Bar used co-manufacturers to make its products, but the company made the strategic decision to bring manufacturing in-house. Clif Bar was in the middle of building a new bakery in Twin Falls, Idaho, when its largest co-manufacturer, Conagra Foods, decided to exit the co-branded bakery business.

“We had to bring up the brand new Twin Falls bakery, and in the same year, convert all ERP, warehouse, manufacturing, and other business systems within six months to take over Conagra Food’s Indianapolis bakery. An amazing and talented team of internal IT professionals, suppliers including RFgen, consultants, and business leaders pulled off successful rollouts in both bakeries despite pretty tough challenges,” explained Dave Hartwell, Sr. Director of Business Applications.

To boost efficiency in both bakeries, Hartwell looked for a mobile data collection solution that integrated with Oracle’s JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and would enable bakery associates to use wireless barcode scanners.

The Solution

RFgen Mobile Foundations for Oracle’s JD Edwards EnterpriseOne is a suite of pre-written, pre-tested Oracle-validated data collection solutions that enable manufacturers to benefit from real-time barcode data collection and roaming mobile applications while requiring zero footprint on the JD Edwards application server.

Hartwell selected RFgen for its flexibility and its integration capabilities. He also liked the experience offered by the RFgen team, which had worked extensively in the food and beverage industry and had proven experience with lot-controlled inventory management.

“RFgen provided flexibility on the front-end to design the transactions the way our bakeries actually operate while still honoring the critical JD Edwards integration. It gave us the best of both worlds,” Hartwell said. “It was also the most affordable solution.”

The Result

Clif Bar associates use wireless barcode scanners running RFgen to collect data throughout the warehouse, inventory management and manufacturing operations.

RFgen has enabled Clif Bar to:

- Deploy quickly, meeting an aggressive deadline without sacrificing customization or functionality.
- Utilize wireless barcode scanners to improve efficiency and accuracy throughout warehouse and manufacturing operations.
- Enhance sustainability through paperless transaction processing.
- Exchange information with JD Edwards as well as third-party applications for manufacturing, food safety, and equipment maintenance.
- Trace materials and products throughout the supply chain, in compliance with food safety regulations.
- Reduce cost while maintaining the highest quality standards.
- Scale up to accommodate new production lines and rapid company growth.
- Refine transactions to reflect new learning and best practices in pursuit of continuous improvement for bakery operations and controls.

Paperless Processes

The company mantra, “Think like a tree,” reflects Clif Bar’s desire to reduce its environmental footprint. RFgen empowers paperless processes that drive operations for receiving materials, putaway, issuing to work orders, cycle counts, picking, packing, load management, and more.

“One of our objectives was to run the manufacturing and warehouse transactions with a paperless process. Using RFgen’s capabilities to adjust

business rules, but still honor standard JD Edwards business functions made that a reality,” Hartwell said.

Intuitive Transactions

RFgen features a flexible development environment allowing internal or external developers to rapidly customize and create new workflows. Workflows only need to be created once and then can be quickly and easily configured with a variety of screen sizes.

“Because we were able to develop the interface to our transactions just as the bakeries are designed, the transactions are intuitive and the learning curve was much lower than previous experiences. For 80% of our bakery associates, RFgen is JD Edwards, because it is the only system they use,” said Hartwell.

Third-Party Integrations

In addition to real-time, validated integration between JD Edwards and barcode scanners, RFgen also exchanges information between JD Edwards and WonderWare manufacturing execution software, SafetyChain software for food safety, and SOMAX predictive maintenance software.

“We wanted a single standard interface between systems. RFgen provides a single engine that integrates both real-time warehouse transactions using barcode scanners and third-party integrations with JD Edwards through the RFgen batch queue function,” Hartwell explained.

Lot-Level Traceability

Like all food and beverage companies, food safety regulations require Clif Bar to be able to trace its ingredients and finished products throughout the supply chain. All materials are lot controlled and tracked by RFgen.

“At Clif Bar, there is simply nothing more important than food quality and safety,” said Hartwell. “RFgen allows us to seamlessly transact our lot required items to provide the inventory usage and lot traceability we require.”

License Plating

License plating is a method of grouping inventory together for easier management and tracking. License plates can be created at any point in the food manufacturing process, including receiving, work-in-progress, handling finished goods, picking, and shipping.

“For all of our lot managed items, we use RFgen’s License Plating applications. Materials are transacted by the license plate throughout the warehouse process,” said Hartwell, who has also been pleased with RFgen load management functionality. “Without any additional licensing costs, we were able to leverage RFgen load management. That enabled us to customize the load management process to match how we pick, pack, load, and track orders.”

Strategic Partnership

Clif Bar’s innovative use of manufacturing technology won the company a 2017 Manufacturing Leadership Award from Frost & Sullivan in the category of Enterprise Technology Leadership. RFgen was one of several key technologies used.

“Our important suppliers are more than just suppliers; they are our partners. For us, RFgen has met that call,” said Hartwell. “Our dedicated RFgen sales manager went above and beyond. We provided our RFgen development consultant with our requirements, and he was able to translate those into the transactions we needed. His deep expertise in JDE—both functional knowledge and development experience—was critical to our success.”

About RFgen Software

RFgen Software helps organizations reduce supply chain implementation costs and increase accuracy and efficiency with the industry’s most reliable and flexible mobile data collection software and supply chain automation solutions.

Enabling you to increase productivity by providing your mobile workforce with real-time and on-demand access to enterprise data, RFgen’s mobile data collection solutions easily connect Windows, Android and Apple iOS mobile devices like barcode scanners, tablets, handheld computers, voice recognition devices and more to your back office ERP systems and databases, including Oracle’s JD Edwards, Oracle E-Business Suite, SAP, SAP Business One, Deltek Costpoint and more.

In business since 1983, RFgen is known in the manufacturing and distribution industries for its solid, high-quality products and high customer satisfaction ratings among its more than 2,800 customers. With a global reach and local touch, RFgen and its network of more than 140 certified solution partners can support your organization no matter where your operations are located around the world.

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