Transformation through Teamwork Done with Data You Can Trust

By John Reynolds
Director of Sales

The year was 1949; San Antonians Rufus and Juanita Kiolbassa were convinced people would love a true, handcrafted sausage made the old-fashioned way. It would be slowly smoked with real wood, and made only in small batches with fresh, never frozen, meat. The result? A truly authentic sausage, bursting with rich, natural flavor. You can taste the heritage of Kiolbassa in every delicious bite of their smoked meats. Today, Kiolbassa continues to produce handcrafted sausage in 150-pound batches under the leadership of grandson Michael Kiolbassa, President of Kiolbassa Provision Company.

Like many companies do, Kiolbassa started out with general accounting software, but used spreadsheets to track day-to-day movement of product and production. As they continued to grow and expand into new markets, they realized the shortcomings associated with this process and the challenges created by having unreliable information. The need for insight and proper growth management across each area of the business became apparent.

Rufus Kiolbassa, founder of Kiolbassa Smoked Meats

THAT WAS *Then*

In 2013, Kiolbassa formed a team consisting of several members of the management group. They selected Aspen Systems' Canopy software as the key focus of the entire organization and the application allowing migration of the business from whiteboards and spreadsheets to ERP.
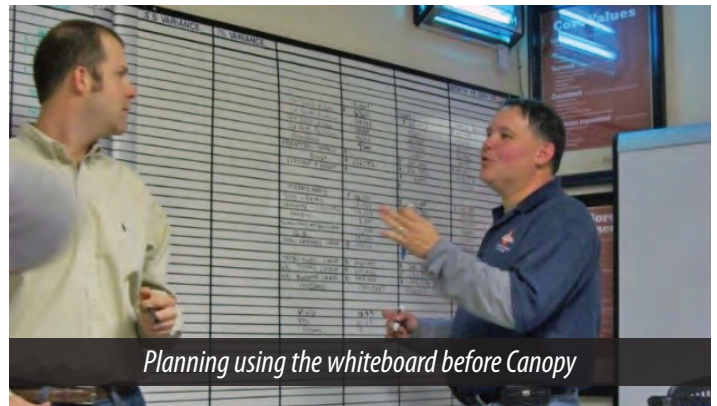
Planning using the whiteboard before Canopy

Unlike some projects, going from a manual system to a full ERP is not a small undertaking. Training people in the different areas of your operation is a major process. How do you convince people to buy into the project and spend the time learning a new system? Kiolbassa chose to accomplish this feat by sending people to Aspen's Phoenix office for special training and by creating teams to implement the various modules of the system. One of the teams they created was their Data Capture Team; they even had shirts made for them.

Collaboration is key at Kiolbassa. In addition to weekly sales meetings, they also have a weekly "Budget Huddle." Employees gather to review the budget and where they currently stand, and determine prime opportunities for improvement. By utilizing an "Open-Book" management style where they share key metrics and give employees a stake in the company's growth, everyone is able to help the company make better decisions. From recognizing opportunities from raw material cost savings, to yield awareness, to scheduling, employee knowledge and stake has grown exponentially in the past several years.

THIS IS *Now!*

Team in Phoenix for Canopy training

The Sales Team now uses the Canopy Forecast module to produce a sales forecast, by customer and product, for the 52-weeks of the coming year. It is used as the budget reference for the company. The working forecast is maintained through weekly sales meetings. Customer orders are received via EDI, email, and fax and entered in Order Entry. These orders and the forecasts are available to all the teams at Kiolbassa.

The Supply Chain Team uses the forecast to generate an MRL *(material requirements list)* for the weeks ahead. The Purchasing module is used to order meat, ingredients, and supplies required for production. Using the Data Capture and Inventory modules, this team manages inventory throughout the company. Staging of raw materials for each day's production are being delivered JIT *(just in time)* to the production area for usage. The Supply Chain Team also relies heavily on Pulse *(dashboards)* to provide real time data pull for their inventory levels. This lets them know in real time when they are getting heavy on certain items or need to order more.

> "Kiolbassa Smoked Meats and Aspen Systems truly are a great example of a partnership of two companies working together."

The Production Team schedules products in Canopy's Production module, building for orders and for inventory. They produce products in the kitchens in each of their two plants. Products are then smoked in the four smoke houses and finally packed on one of the four packing lines. With the addition of new in-motion scales, automatic case labelers and pallet labelers, everything produced can be added to inventory by Canopy as the cases are produced, weighed, and labeled, in lieu of writing the information down for data entry at a later time. This also permits dynamic consumption of raw materials and accurate finished product inventory balances in real time as production is completed.

The Quality Team can monitor the process more efficiently with Canopy and is able to perform "mock recalls" within 15 minutes to verify their quality control processes. Temperatures are monitored throughout the plants using Canopy's Element module.

Finished products can be transferred using the in-transit process and scan gun technology into the Finished Goods Warehouse. These products can also be scanned as they are prepared for shipment to customers, with ASNs *(advanced*
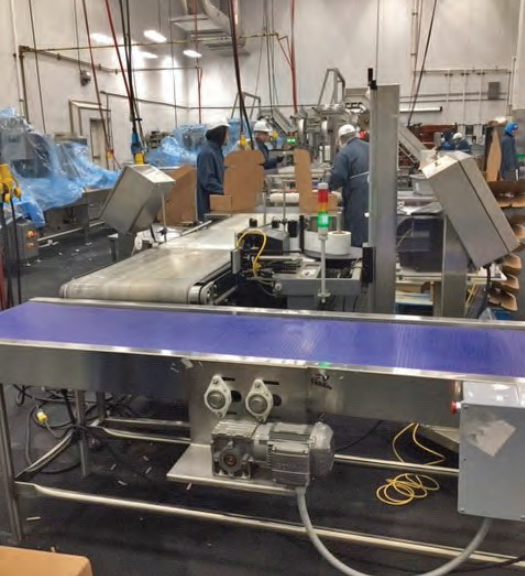
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shipment notice) generated for some customers as the orders are processed and completed.

As part of the collaborative effort between the Sales Team, the Product Management Team, the Production Team, the Supply Chain Team, and Canopy, Kiolbassa can obtain from the forecast expected materials and labor costs for the upcoming months. Accounting uses the AR, AP, and GL modules to provide financial details to the company on the performance versus the budget, established at the beginning of the fiscal year.

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Kiolbassa Smoked Meats has experienced tremendous growth over their lifetime; the addition of their second plant will help maintain their product demand as they continue to expand. Kiolbassa continues to add additional Canopy Enhanced Modules to their list of tools, along with the automation of their weighing/labeling lines. Kiolbassa Smoked Meats and Aspen Systems truly are a great example of a partnership of two companies working together.