



AN AMBITIOUS BUSINESS STRATEGY

By Steve French, Chief Information Officer



Ambitious business strategies can be characterized by product innovation, speed of decision-making, quick reactions to a fast-changing environment, gaining a technological advantage, and rapidly increasing sales. Companies who effectively adopt this strategy become industry leaders.

Two years ago, the ownership at The Fish Guys in St. Louis Park, Minnesota decided that the time had come to be more ambitious with the business. A new President & COO, who had

a successful background in business management, sales, growth, acquisitions, and finance, joined the company. One of the first changes made was to replace their ERP system with Aspen Systems Canopy software modules, which are designed specifically for food manufacturers, distributors, importers, and exporters.



The Fish Guys process and distribute seafood and meat items throughout the upper Midwest, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Their meat company is identified by the brand name Market House Meats. With 95 total employees, 50,000 square feet of warehouse, freezer, and cold storage space, two warehouses, a fleet of 20+ trucks, and 10 salespeople, they are well equipped to service their customers. They have over 4,000+ SKUs including fresh cut seafood, frozen seafood, dry goods, and cut and boxed meat. Over 350 restaurants are serviced, and they distribute fresh and frozen products to two premium retailers.

The Fish Guys were very ambitious in implementing Canopy. Most companies go live with the Canopy Core and sometimes one or two enhanced modules. Optional modules are typically implemented in additional phases following the go live. The Fish Guys, however, implemented the Canopy Core, Production, Data Capture, Event Watch, Pulse, Document Imaging, and eCommerce all within the first 30 days of going live! They proved to be an incredibly intellectual team of people, with positive attitudes and great modern technology-centric ideas.

One of the reasons for success was their willingness to brainstorm with their Aspen Systems' Implementation Specialist, discussing how they can change with Canopy to be more efficient rather than adapting Canopy to fit inefficient procedures tied to their old ERP system. Their willingness to adapt truly pushed them forward as they came up with creative ideas and innovation, which created efficiencies for the business during the Canopy implementation.

The Canopy software modules have helped The Fish Guys in many ways. One of the biggest areas of improvement was in the seafood production room. A paperless process was implemented using Canopy's Data Capture, Production, and Pulse modules. Three large monitors were used in the Production room, one for the seafood cut table, one for the shellfish table, and one for the packing table. Pulse dashboards display on multiple monitors showing the cutters, butchers, and packers which products were ordered, what products need to be produced, and what products need to be packed. When product is produced, it is weighed on a Data Capture scale station, an inventory label is printed, inventory in Canopy is updated, quantities are assigned to the correct order, a shipping label is printed, and the product is put on a pallet. The entire process is sorted by route and color-

WHAT THE FISH GUYS SAID ABOUT CANOPY

"There are so many useful modules in Canopy! We started using The Data Capture Scale Stations, Labeling, Scanning, Production, Event Watch, Document Imaging, Pulse, and eCommerce modules right from the start. They have eliminated so much of the repetitive communication because now anyone can find the information in the system."

— LEAD BUSINESS ANALYST

"Canopy has eliminated certain tasks for me, like updating our inventory five times a day."

— SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT

"I have been really impressed with Aspen Systems' support staff. They are always quick to respond and are very helpful."

— DIRECTOR OF IT

"Canopy has helped me to make better purchasing decisions with live inventory, and it streamlines the process so that I can use my time for other things like helping the sales team or putting together product information and marketing tools."

— MEAT PROCUREMENT

"The software has enabled us to streamline nearly every aspect of the sales department, in turn improving the customer experience."

— VP OF SALES

"With Canopy, relaying accurate product pricing information to clients has never been easier."

— MEAT SPECIALIST/SALES

coded for efficiency. Canopy's Production module monitors for yields out of range throughout the day by cutter, butcher, and product. When the truck loaders are ready to load product onto a truck, they enter the seafood production room and move it from there to the shipping dock. A similar process has been adopted in the meat production room.

Aspen View, Canopy's built in report writer, has been beneficial as a means for creating custom reports for every department. For the sales team, Aspen Views are scheduled to send information such as the daily inventory availability, weekly price changes, notifications regarding credits issued for customers and products, and sales export files are created for certain chain customers. For the procurement team, Aspen Views show how many weeks of inventory they have on hand, which vendors are providing them with the best margin, what amount of product was wasted or spoiled, and what inbound items are being reserved for specific customer accounts. In the accounting department, they

eliminated hours of tedious work by sending out custom weekly statements for select customers and they save time by scanning and electronically storing receivable and payable documents, versus filing them into cabinets. Because Aspen View is also the engine for Pulse and Event Watch, a report can easily be turned into a dashboard or notification alert, adding more efficiencies to the organization.

Businesses who use an ambitious strategy can innovate, stay several steps ahead of their competition, recognize opportunities as they come, stay on top of their business, and prosper in the future. Partnered with Aspen Systems' Canopy Software modules, The Fish Guys have a solid foundation to support this strategy. The Fish Guys is truly a company to watch as they will no doubt continue to grow and lead their industry as they utilize innovative practices fueled by the power of Canopy.



"Pulse dashboards are a great way for the production room and the order desk to communicate certain weights or special instructions to each other without having to rely on constant walkie-talkie or e-mail communication."

— PROCESS IMPROVEMENT MANAGER

"Canopy has completely changed the way that we do business because we can all look at one computer screen instead of scrambling to call or e-mail each other to find the answers that we need. With the use of Pulse, Event Watch, and Aspen View Report Writer, anyone from any department can get the information that they need in a fraction of the time."

— GENERAL MANAGER

"Our customers are now notified automatically when their will-call orders are ready to pick-up, or when a COD order is on its way to them so that they can prepare the check. Confirmations that we have received their online order are also sent automatically."

— PROCESS IMPROVEMENT MANAGER

"An entire group of our retail store customers are using the eCommerce module. In addition to placing their orders and checking prices, they now have the ability to look up their old invoices which saves both parties a ton of time. We are currently approaching more and more restaurant customers to get on the eCommerce module as well, and the ones that have already adopted the process love it."

— SALES MANAGER

"The Document Imaging module scans invoices from our vendors. This used to be a process that took significantly longer, and invoices would often get lost in the shuffle. Moving to an electronic process has been a vast improvement."

— AP MANAGER

"Our Aspen Systems' Implementation Specialist was extremely helpful. Even the best written user manuals are no match for an in-person consultation, and it was great that she was able to really customize our implementation based on our goals and problems we wished to solve."

— LEAD BUSINESS ANALYST