

Rapid Growth Tied to Expanded Use of Canopy

By Mickey Reese
Director of Solutions



Lower Foods has a long history in Cache Valley, Utah. Russel Lower began a slaughtering business back in the 1920's. This was during a time when each town had freezer storage lockers where residents stored their meat. He would slaughter the animals in a small building in town, then process them in the barn at his home. He had to use block ice,

purchased from the same company that rented meat lockers, to refrigerate the meat. It wasn't until the 1940's, when he built a three-room slaughter facility, that he had a refrigerated cooler room. He named the plant 'Smithfield Abattoir' (*French for slaughterhouse*) and after he processed the animals, the meat was delivered to various locker plants throughout Cache Valley.

In 1956, Marilyn and Larry Lower (*Russel's son*) took control of the company and changed the name to Lower Packing Company. They redesigned the company around the home-freezer and offered a complete custom meat service, including

pickup, slaughter, cutting, wrapping, quick freezing, and curing. They also made sausage, jerky, swiss steaks, and smoked turkey for retail sale.

As time moved on, people's needs and eating habits changed. Lower Packing Company became Lower Foods, Inc. and moved to Richmond, Utah. They currently manufacture cooked roast beef, pastrami, prime rib, as well as smoked turkey and ham.



Alan Lower (*Marilyn and Larry's son*) worked for many years in the progression of the company; when Larry passed in 2001, Alan and Marilyn continued the operation. Alan is now sole owner of the company, but the family enterprise continues on as his sons, Chad and Lee, also work at the plant. This makes them a four-generation family enterprise.

I first met 'Lower Foods' in 2008, when they came to Phoenix for training after they purchased Canopy. Michael Mortensen, David Gatherum, Lori Howells, and Ashlie Howells were the first to be introduced to Canopy and the Phoenix portion of our Aspen Family. While not yet four generations deep, Lower has met with the first three generations: George Puype, Lisa Lawrence, and Lisa's daughters Andrea Aberle and Michelle Lawrence. Aspen has an appreciation for its many customers that are family owned and operated.

On my first trip to Richmond, I was working in a conference room in an over-crowded building that included the plant, the offices, and their retail store. They showed me plans for their new freezer and new offices. The new building was huge and I couldn't understand their need for the space. We went to lunch at Big J's Burgers and over lunch



Michael explained the new building would also house a third-party cold storage company.

By my next trip, they were in their new building. During that trip, they learned how to use Data Capture. Alan, who among other things does most of the purchasing, learned how to enter Purchase Orders in Canopy and continues to do them to this day. We also worked out how they could run the third-party cold storage in a separate database in Canopy.

Lower Foods is certified Gluten Free and also free of the top eight allergens. Data Capture, and specifically the flexibility of the Terminal Input stations, has made proving sourcing on products much quicker and easier. Traceability is a key premise throughout Canopy.

By my next visit, I discovered they had grown so much they decided to shut down the cold storage operation and use the freed-up space to accommodate their growth. They were also making additions to their first building to allow more packaging lines. In spite of their rapid growth, they never stopped expanding their use of the Canopy software. My repeated trips to Utah were designed to aid in this endeavor.

Ultimately, they discovered they could accomplish more by heading to Phoenix instead of bringing me to Richmond. Michael Mortensen and Lee Lower made the initial trip to Phoenix. We designed how they would build formulas in Production and how they could use them for costing, pricing, and inventory control for their packaging and ingredients.

Formula	Code	Inventory	Sched	Yest Day	Today	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
BAC1BRNE	BBAC1LL	2	0								
BAR1BRNE	BAR1SHCS	81	720								
BBESSCABFORM	BBESS1512ALL	13	62								
Beef Jerky P	PEFJERK	38	10								
Beef Jerky R	REGJERK	29	12								
BOL1BRNE	BOL1800SLV	3	10								
Boneless Bee	BNLSBFTR	2,587	0								
BPC1FORM	BPC101LL	71	7								
BRRCABFORM	BRR1CAB4	154	0								
BRRCABFORM	BRR1CABRDM	71	58								
BRRCABFORM	BRR1CABU	107	25			0					
BSR1FORM	BSR1CAB	358	20						20		
BSR1FORM	BSR1LL	612	70			36					
BSR1FORM	DCBSR1LL	20	32								
CAR8BRNE	CAR810CA	294	41						3		
CAR8BRNE	CAR810CS	153	12							6	
CAR8BRNE	SCVP825CA	167	139								
CARV8BRNE	CAR810SH25CA	137	9								
CARV8BRNE	CAR810SHCA	24	13								
CAS1BRNE	CAS1DSLCA	193	146								
CAS1BRNE	CAS1SLBR	84	85			0					
CAS1BRNE	SBE1LL	136	39			0					
CB ENDS	CBF3155LE2LL	46	0	0						0	
CB ENDS	CBH300LL	79	20			0					
CB ENDS	DCBF315ZLL	51	8								
CBP10BRNE	CBBF310CB	7	12								12
CBP10BRNE	CBF310CB	0	88	0	0					6	40
CBP10BRNE	CBF310CDR	0	131						111		
CBP10BRNE	CBF310CLL	0	30			0					
CBP10BRNE	PBF210CLL	20	0								
CBP10BRNE	PFF210CB	0	18	0	0					8	
CBP10BRNE	PFF210CDR	0	124	0	0				104		
CBP10BRNE	PFF210CLL	0	45			0			25		
CBP15BRNE	CBB315B	5	0								
CBP15BRNE	CBB315SELL	3	23						18		
CBP15BRNE	CBE315SEB	0	0	0		0			0	0	
CBP15BRNE	CBE315SELL	0	8							6	

Lower's Scheduling Dashboard, created in Pulse using the Interactive List

They decided to add a third person to their trips to Arizona and Keith Morris joined the team. He spends a lot of his time working with Aspen Development on EDI mappings as well as mapping out any Canopy Design changes they may need.

Launi Petersen has taken EDI and run with it. Between that and eCommerce, she has completely overhauled the order entry and invoicing process. Michael used the phrase, "It has changed lives" when referring to the changes in their process.

In keeping with the family tradition, Dylan Mortensen has now joined the team that makes regular visits to Aspen Systems for training and process designing. During one of these trips to Phoenix,





Lower headquarters in Richmond, Utah

we showed them a new feature in Pulse called an Interactive List. They used that to create their own Inventory Dashboard and Scheduling Screen. David, one of Lower's original Canopy users, has taken the new Pulse item and completely revamped their scheduling and production.

"In spite of their rapid growth, they never stopped expanding their use of the Canopy software."

Since the 1920's, the Lower Family has kept an eye toward the future for both growth and consumer needs. According to Michael, they have blended together, "Old world craftsmanship with state-of-the-art processes and equipment." Lower has devoted an impressive amount of time and resources to furthering their use of Canopy. Aspen Systems is proud to have them as a partner and that they continue to grow in their use and development of not just Canopy Core, but also Data Capture, Production, Aspen View, Pulse, EDI, eCommerce, CRM, Document Imaging, Event Watch, Telnet, and TI. Lee Lower said the Canopy suite of software has helped them to grow their operations. I am proud to have them as friends and that I have been able to play a role in helping them to achieve their goals.

3 Easy Steps to Becoming a

CANOPY POWER USER

- 1. Sign up for the Aspen User Forum and use it regularly.*
- 2. Take advantage of your CMP hours and schedule training with Aspen at least once a year. This could be over the phone, online, on-site, or here at Aspen. Make sure more than one person takes part in the training as well.*
- 3. Attend Aspen Workshops.*