

All Aboard... Climbing Canopy - Embracing the Challenge

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"It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change."

- CHARLES DARWIN



Change is never comfortable or easy, whether in your personal life or your professional life. In a food manufacturing and distribution business, the change to a new ERP system can seem like a daunting task. In 2017, when Stampede Meat, based in Bridgeview, IL, decided to switch their ERP software to Aspen's ERP software solution known as Canopy, they knew employees would need to embrace the change for the project to be successful.

Stampede was founded in 1995 and pride themselves on their delivery of pre-portioned protein to restaurants, retailers, club stores, foodservice distributors, home delivery, and eCommerce customers. In addition, they provide prepared meals, soups, vegetables, and vegan protein alternatives. Stampede has four locations in the

Chicago area with approximately 285,000 sq. ft. and an annual production capacity in excess of 190 million pounds. In December 2018, they opened their first facility in the southwest in Sunland Park, NM, adding 142,000 sq. ft. and a capacity of over 100 million pounds per year. In a company this size, engaging in a project like this may sound overwhelming. Changing ERP software is bound to impact daily workflows, upsetting employee's normal routines; however, Stampede believed the change would provide future benefits and that the challenge would be worth the effort.

Recognizing employee buy-in was essential to the success of this project - Stampede put incentive programs in place to motivate employees to learn as much as possible about the software. They also decided to publish a monthly Climbing Canopy newsletter. This name was selected because "the view is clearer at the top of a tree's canopy." In the newsletter, they interviewed employees



in various departments to better understand their roles and how Canopy helps them in their day-to-day at the office.

In the July 2018 Climbing Canopy issue, the Purchasing team was featured, and insight was shared on how Canopy has helped them perform their duties more efficiently. Bill was quoted as saying, "I start my day on the phone. Evaluating suppliers based on price, quality, and speed of delivery of their products is my main priority. Canopy has summarized those components for me in one place and makes my job efficient and gives me the clarity to the data I couldn't see before to negotiate prices. I can do it myself, Canopy is user-friendly."

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In each newsletter, a featured column is "Canopy Quick Tip." Here, the writers provide users with a tip on how to use a feature in Canopy. In one of their past newsletters, they explained to users how to add their "favorite" Canopy menu options to their Favorite screens in the Canopy Menu. They went on to explain that users would be able to access these "favorites" in the tile, tree, and system view when using Canopy Menu. Another monthly article topic is the "Climbing Canopy Challenge." Users are given a challenge for the month that encourages employees to increase their knowledge of Canopy or to suggest procedures that will benefit the employees and Stampede.

The Stampede Canopy Super User Team was sent to Phoenix for both team building and additional training with Aspen staff. Chad Bingham, Stampede's Director of Information Technology, stated, "Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the training and informed our executive team about how much they learned and benefited from this event. Each team member also committed to setting and achieving three goals in 2020 that directly relate to utilizing Canopy to improve operational efficiency and turn data into insight and

THE CANOPY OATH

To help Stampede maximize the use of Canopy, in 2019, they created a Canopy Super User Team with members representing each module in Canopy. To be part of the Super User Team, the employee has to "take the Canopy oath."

On my honor, I will...

- **Be willing and ready to accept this great responsibility**
- **Commit to the other Super Users to work together on interdepartmental functions**
- **Ensure my regular responsibilities are covered**
- **Learn all I can about Canopy (particularly my assigned module)**
- **Attend official Canopy training, review Canopy manuals, videos, and documentation**
- **Read and participate in Aspen's online Forum**
- **Develop and document standard operating procedures (SOPs)**
- **Train end-users using SOP documentation and training materials**
- **Test, review, and approve Canopy updates that impact my module or my department**
- **Submit my success stories (with Stampede in action photos) to the Climbing Canopy Newsletter**

action. This represents an important step for Stampede as we are finally starting to understand the full potential of Canopy. The Super Users are all enthusiastic about Canopy and its capabilities.”

When asked about their favorite feature in Canopy and what it has done to help them to be more efficient or to have better knowledge, Chad got the following responses:

“My favorite feature in Canopy is the ‘Purchase Order Inquiry’ screen. Due to constantly processing payments that were assigned purchase order numbers, I am always using this screen to gather more information on the purchase order and solve problems. The ‘Purchase Order Inquiry’ screen gives one all the data they need to know about past, present, and future purchase orders. One can see who entered the purchase order, how much was ordered, how much was received, the unit price, etc. It is thanks to this screen that I can solve daily issues. I can easily tell if the correct weight was received, which warehouse the shipment was delivered to, or whether our unit price matches what we were invoiced.”

- Accounts Payable

“One of the features I’m most excited about is the Aspen View sub reports and the ability to include hyperlinks in these reports. This adds a whole other layer of reporting capabilities. It allows us to summarize data in a meaningful way but also gives users the ability to easily drill-down into details without having to open and click through a bunch of different screens.”

- Production & Inventory Control

“My favorite feature is the Aspen View report writer. I like how it is flexible enough to bring different parts together quickly and intuitive enough to pick up easily. The report writer has allowed me to generate a report of the short-paid invoices for the past year that I am investigating and resolving.”

- Accounts Receivable

“OE Change Tracking/Visibility of user information for most Canopy transactions is my favorite feature. Accountability is very important in any organization. Having the visibility to determine who is responsible for any order changes and the user information behind most Canopy transactions are essential elements in making everybody more responsible for their actions.”

- Logistics

“Event Watch and Pulse Dashboards are my favorite. Working in a fast-paced environment like the Logistics Department is quite challenging. Different types of errors can inevitably happen. Event Watch alerts and Pulse graphs are very useful tools that minimize if not eliminate errors. These tools provide us the visibility of vital information straight out of Canopy in real-time through several means such as emails and text messages, helping us make quick decisions and react promptly and most importantly prevent critical errors from happening.”

- Logistics



Training at Aspen’s Headquarters



Stampede’s decision to incorporate innovative concepts to encourage, motivate, and support their employees to fully participate in the implementation of Canopy has paid off. It is a fantastic model for implementation success. Aspen employees were impressed and inspired by this unique approach. The results showed their employees were motivated to learn all they could about Canopy and best of all, they developed a team of experts to mentor and guide their co-workers in using Canopy to gain advantages that come from a powerful information system. After seeing how they went after the challenge of Climbing Canopy, it is no wonder that Stampede is a leader in their industry!

Take the first step in bettering yourself as a Canopy user by signing up for our user forum

aspen.forumflash.com