



BATCHMASTER®
Process Manufacturing Software



Seamless BatchMaster Connection to QuickBooks Positions AgroPlantae for Rapid Growth

Customer Success Story:



OVERVIEW/INTRO

Plant nutrition specialist AgroPlantae needed to revamp its technology stack to better meet its process manufacturing needs and scale more efficiently. The maker of plant nutrient fertilizers deployed BME Web with QuickBooks, which more closely aligned its financial processes with formula, inventory, and warehouse management functionality it didn't have previously.

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BatchMaster now offers an integration with QuickBooks Online, which makes it much more affordable and available to more people.

Beatrice Paolucci
Procurement Manager
AgroPlantae

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CUSTOMER	AgroPlantae
INDUSTRY	Agricultural chemicals and fertilizers
LOCATION	Fresno, CA
PRODUCT	BME Web with QB

KEY RESULTS

- Integrated QuickBooks financials with BatchMaster process manufacturing, creating a unified platform for streamlined operations
- Eliminated duplicate data entry into siloed systems, saving **two hours per day or 50 percent**
- No longer use “fake” inventory workarounds required in its legacy system
- Reduced the use of Excel and data manipulation, resulting in better and more accurate analysis
- Gained more insight into inventory, improving production efficiency
- Consolidated and reduced technology spend from three siloed systems to two connected applications
- Achieved a connected system upon which AgroPlantae can use to greatly increase production and revenues as it expands its physical footprint

CHALLENGES

AgroPlantae’s CEO and founder, Angelo Paolucci, is preparing the small company’s operations for rapid growth.

For the past year, he has worked with the City of Fresno, CA, on zoning changes that will allow AgroPlantae to triple its manufacturing and warehouse space, double its laboratory space, and, separately, its office space.

For the past 16 years, the family-owned company has perfected its formulas, evaluated its products, and begun selling its high-quality organic and conventional agricultural nutritional products. AgroPlantae sells plant extracts, micronutrients, specialty fertilizers, soil amendments, microbial products, and water-soluble and liquid NPKs. The company’s products improve plant health and quality while increasing yields.

Its secret sauce is that it has developed technologies that make it easier for plants to absorb nutrients. It sells its products through distributors that work with large commercial crop farmers seeking to improve soil health and crop yields.

“The nutrients we provide really make huge differences in crop yield,” says Paolucci, who handles Procurement and HR, and is the founder’s daughter. “Our products are selling very quickly. As we exit the R&D phase, we’re gearing up for rapid expansion and an exciting new chapter of growth.”

Siloed Systems Wasted Time

AgroPlantae began its operations on QuickBooks, and later switched to Account Mate as its ERP. “Account Mate should have done everything but its accounting software wasn't very strong, so we supplemented it with QuickBooks Online,” Paolucci says. “That led to a lot of double entry.”

Executives used spreadsheets to analyze financial data and create reports, which meant they spent a lot of time importing and exporting data between different applications. She estimates she spent four hours a day manipulating data.

“We really had to manipulate the data ourselves to make it work,” she says. Moving all the data around made them question whether the data was correct; sometimes it wasn't.

Needed a Comprehensive System

She adds that Account Mate didn't provide all of the process manufacturing functionality AgroPlantae needed. The company sells its products by case, tote, and bulk. It also uses several of its raw materials as ingredients in other products.

“Account Mate didn't allow us to use the finished good as an ingredient for another product,” she says. “So we would have to create a fake order, which meant we had to do a double entry for some products.”

Then, employees had to remember to delete the fake order.



SOLUTION

Previous BatchMaster Knowledge

Angelo Paolucci had learned about BatchMaster years ago while working at large corporations, and knew it was something he wanted to use at some point, Paolucci explains. But until AgroPlantae grew much larger than two people, it really wasn't an affordable solution. "Account Mate was a bit outdated from the start, but that's what we had to make work with our limited resources," says Paolucci.

Today, the company employs 20, revenues have surpassed \$9 million, and construction will soon begin on new manufacturing and warehouse facilities that will triple their size.

In preparation for growth, AgroPlantae looked for a modern ERP that was more efficient, offered more advanced accounting, and could handle more of its process manufacturing needs. The selection team evaluated Oracle NetSuite and Mendix, both of which offered manufacturing functionality.

"All of the other ERP systems that we looked at would have been fully custom ERP systems, and wouldn't really fit the team we had at the time," Paolucci says. "None of them seemed like they were going to be the right fit for us. They would have required a huge time and monetary investment and would have been a really big change for us."

In addition, AgroPlantae has a pretty standard recipe-making process that really didn't require the custom development the ERP solutions were selling, she says.

New Seamless Connection with QuickBooks

"Then we noticed that BatchMaster now offered an integration with QuickBooks Online, which makes it much more affordable and available to more people," Paolucci says.

BatchMaster Process Manufacturing provides formulation, packaging management, costing, inventory, production, quality, planning, scheduling, lot traceability and recall, industry specific compliance, and mobile warehousing. The process manufacturing application can be seamlessly integrated with existing financial packages, including QuickBooks Online.

"It just made sense for us," Paolucci says.

Easy-to-Use Interface

AgroPlantae executives liked that Batchmaster had an easy-to-use interface, and that they could access company data from home if desired.

“Compared to our old system, it was a much updated interface,” Paolucci says. “Our old system looked like one of those 2003 Word applications.”

Like many companies, executives were at first worried about storing company data in the cloud. “We were a bit nervous but it's actually turned out to be very beneficial because we don't have to be on one of the computers where the software resides,” she says. “It makes it more accessible from remote locations.”

IMPLEMENTATION

Because they already used QuickBooks Online, and BatchMaster is an established system offering process manufacturing, AgroPlantae's implementation consisted of a lot of out-of-the-box functionality. “It was like it was already set up,” Paolucci says. “We just needed to input our data and learn the system. It took a bit of time because we had so much data.”

“Overall, it was a very smooth transition,” she adds. “We coupled it with cleaning up some of our data, which probably added a few extra hurdles from our side, but it felt good to start fresh.”

They exported data to Excel and sent the spreadsheets to the BatchMaster team, which caught any mistakes AgroPlantae may have made while cleaning data, she says.

“They were really good about finding errors and helping us clean up the data.”

Because BatchMaster is easy to use and user-friendly, “It was easy to train someone how to use it, and it wasn't intimidating, difficult or slow. Everyone we've hired has had an easy time learning it,” Paolucci says.



BENEFITS

Prepared for Rapid Growth

AgroPlantae is now well positioned to scale efficiently with a tightly integrated system that marries its financials with an end-to-end process manufacturing system.

“The integration with QuickBooks has worked really well,” Paolucci says. “It’s very simple and everything just shows up in QuickBooks. All we have to do is match the invoices we get or send out, and that automated process has saved a lot of time.”

Paolucci estimates she saves two hours a day with the BatchMaster QuickBooks connection. While she or others may have spent four hours a day preparing data from two different systems, they now spend two, she estimates.

The company has much more faith that its numbers are accurate because they aren’t having to export and import data between siloed applications.

They no longer have to create fake entries or remember to delete the fakes because BatchMaster allows AgroPlantae to use finished goods as a raw material for other products.

“That’s been very helpful because we don’t have to create multiple work orders to complete a single process in the system,” Paolucci says.

Improved Inventory Management

BatchMaster has improved the company’s visibility into inventory and production with dashboards and other manufacturing reports that AgroPlantae didn’t have previously.

“It’s much easier to see a list of what we have on order for a list of what is being produced or going to be produced,” Paolucci says. “Those reports definitely helped increase our visibility.”

Executives no longer have to check a spreadsheet where they previously logged raw materials in and out to check what inventory they have in stock. They also don’t have to look at the physical inventory, do mathematical conversions to see how much of an ingredient they have, and determine whether they have enough for an order.

Instead, they can see the entire inventory in BatchMaster and determine whether they have enough to proceed. “We are now able to stay on the stock much more effectively,” Paolucci says.

Automated Reporting

Having the ability to generate reports automatically has reduced the time the team had to spend manually preparing data, and the time spent verifying and cleaning up the data, she says.

"We're continuously discovering what the system can do, and the sheer number of reports available in BatchMaster has cut down on our manual cleanup time because all the data is in one system."

Solid Support

AgroPlantae was left to fend for itself after it deployed Account Mate, so having BatchMaster as a resource for support issues was very helpful. "Anytime I've had an issue, the support team has been really great at either fixing the issue or explaining how to work around it so it wasn't an issue. That support isn't something we had before," Paolucci stated.

Stable Platform for Growth

AgroPlantae now has a strong technology platform to rely on as it prepares for a significant growth spurt as more commercial farms look for more products to help them increase yields and soil health. Corn, soybean, and wheat growers across the nation are struggling to make a profit as input costs such as diesel have skyrocketed, and crop prices have decreased.

AgroPlantae is well positioned because its products aren't needed in the very large quantities offered by conventional fertilizer manufacturers. "Our product line is very niche, and we're not selling any of the standard MPA that goes in very large quantities," she says. "We sell very specialized products applied in low quantities to the plant, but they make huge differences in the production."

The company is growing its product line into further niches, which Paolucci explains is like selling different multivitamins. "Our products aren't something you have to have, but these little quantities really make a huge difference to the plants."

"There is a lot of growth coming up for us and now we have a sound system that can grow with us," Paolucci says. "It's a great system that allows a lot of flexibility and it is able to work with our existing QuickBooks system, which made for a smooth transition."

About BatchMaster Software

BatchMaster Software is a leading provider of ERP solutions that help emerging and growing formula-based manufacturers streamline their operations and scale production while reducing costs and complying with changing customer demands and ever more stringent regulatory mandates. The company delivers industry-specific solutions for Food, Beverage, Nutraceuticals, Pharmaceuticals, Cosmetics, Chemicals, and other process industries. BatchMaster ERP is seamlessly embedded within SAP Business One, providing a comprehensive process manufacturing solution that is available on-premise and in the cloud. BatchMaster Software has served the process manufacturing market for over 30 years and supports thousands of customers worldwide.



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