

Selecting an ERP Solution to Support Expanding Business

The Challenge:

Kayem Foods, Inc., a growing meat processing and distribution company, was faced with a patchwork of stand-alone and difficult-to-support processes and systems that hampered their efficiency and growth potential. They wanted to upgrade to an integrated, architecturally sound and maintainable solution for managing back-office functions, inventory and manufacturing. Many of the existing processes and interfaces were manual and time consuming in nature; thereby necessitating an exercise to choose an integrated enterprise software solution to support its expanding business.

The goal was to expeditiously select the appropriate software platform which would integrate the silos of information into a central repository that would be available to all functions based on security. The functions included Customer Care, Sales and Marketing, Planning and Forecasting, Manufacturing, and Distribution. By integrating the data into a central location and applying the appropriate business logic, the following benefits were sought:

- Streamline processing;
- Eliminate redundancy;
- Protect data integrity;
- Automate cost accounting;
- Establish one source for data;
- Facilitate strategic planning;
- Increase efficiency; and
- Reduce manual processes.

Objectives:

- Establish a stable Information Technology (IT) infrastructure to support future growth;
- Build an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) infrastructure to support:
 - Best business practices
 - Multiple plants and warehouses
 - Customer service
 - Sales analysis
 - Advanced Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP);
- Integrate all corporate data into a universal centralized database;
- Improve productivity by automating manual tasks; and
- Reduce administrative costs and improve accuracy by eliminating redundant data entry.

The Approach:

Kayem Foods partnered with Edgewater Technology to gather and analyze requirements, as well as develop and execute a plan to find the most appropriate ERP solution. Given the integral nature of the enterprise system to the business, Edgewater carefully and thoroughly gathered requirements for an evaluation process to ensure the selected platform would meet critical near-term and long-term needs. Edgewater conducted extensive employee and management interviews to compile a list of business, technical and operational requirements. These discussions helped prioritize the most important features and functions for the new system, and provided focus and consensus-building for Kayem Foods.

From the detailed requirements, Edgewater developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) which was sent to vendors who potentially met the selection criteria. A vendor evaluation form was created to enable a consistent scoring process amongst the evaluators. Edgewater also developed a scripted demo for the RFP finalists to follow in order to highlight the ability of the software to meet particular requirements.

Throughout the process, Kayem Foods was able to leverage Edgewater's expertise in evaluating each vendor's demonstration and for following up on gaps and areas of concern.

The Results:

Kayem Foods was able to match enterprise software features and functions against the business, functional and technical requirements they had identified. The evaluation was carried out not only through review of vendor descriptions of the software capability, but also through seeing key portions of the functionality demonstrated in the software. These activities provided Kayem Foods with a comfort level when determining the software's ability to address the needs of their growing business.

Success Factors:

- Requirements Facilitation – Gaining consensus across departments regarding platform selection criteria and their relative priority.
- Coordinated Standard Evaluation of Responses – Establishing a format for vendor responses and a scoring matrix for evaluators to follow.
- Technical Due Diligence – Reviewing the technical architecture and tool set for meeting immediate and long-term needs.
- Scripted Demo – Creating a demo for vendor finalists to follow which demonstrated the software product against Kayem Foods scenarios and data.

