

▶ Southeastern Mills, Inc.

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► lower costs and efficiently manage operations.

Business Issues

Southeastern Mills had different enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems for each of its three divisions. To remain competitive in the low-margin food industry, Southeastern Mills needed to consolidate its operations on one ERP system to lower IT support costs and efficiently manage its operations based on a unified view of corporate data. The company also needed to create an IT environment that would make it easy to integrate new locations into its business.

Southeastern Mills, a long-time user of SSA Global enterprise software, chose to implement SSA ERP at all of its locations.

The Company

Southeastern Mills, a 70-year-old family-owned supplier to the food industry, is one of the largest providers of batters and breadings to U.S. processed food manufacturers and restaurant chains. From its beginnings as a high-quality flour mill, the company's product line has expanded to also include a wide range of value-added flour-based products. The company serves the food processor, food service/distribution, retail, and consumer baking markets with the following products: batters & breadings; seasonings & marinades; sauce & gravy mixes; baking mixes; and commodities. Its operations include three divisions in nine locations, with 350 employees and 125 SSA ERP users. Southeastern Mills is headquartered in Rome, GA, USA.

What's Critical

Southeastern Mills needed an information technology infrastructure that would provide effective communications across the company so management could make the best possible business decisions. The new systems also would need to eliminate

company	Southeastern Mills, Inc.
solution	SSA® Enterprise Resource Planning
product	SSA BPCS® 8.2
platform	IBM® eServer™ iSeries™
operating system	OS/400®
database	IBM DB2®
industry	Food and Beverage
employees	350
country	USA

existing islands of information at its divisions to lower costs and make it easier to allocate IT resources within the organization.

“We're in a very competitive business where it is essential to keep a tight reign on costs in order to stay ahead of the competition,” explains James E. Ruch II, director of information services, Southeastern Mills. “We needed a corporate-wide ERP system that could easily provide management with detailed cost information for each of our divisions and create an IT infrastructure that minimized support costs.”

The new IT system had to help Southeastern Mills become more agile so it could easily assimilate newly acquired divisions into the company's central operations. “Our goal was to have a centralized IT shop supporting all of our sites so it was the right move to get everybody working on the same software,” says Ruch.

Finding the Right Solution

Southeastern Mills decided to implement the latest version of SSA ERP (SSA BPCS 8.2) at all of its locations. “We already had a long history using SSA ERP at one of our divisions and we had the well-developed internal IT expertise to support this

installation,” explains Ruch. “Expanding SSA ERP to our other divisions made sense.” Even though SSA ERP was well established in the company and had a proven record, Southeastern Mills evaluated some competing products.

“We were reviewing and actually considering some competing products,” says Ruch. “But we've been impressed with the SSA Global management team and their commitment to the product line,” he continues. “We realized quickly that SSA Global was the partner that could best support our growth.”

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► improve data integrity.

Implementing Fast

According to Ruch, the SSA ERP upgrade went smoothly and took less than three months at each location. “We broke down the implementation into manageable parts based on the recommendation of a third-party consultant,” he says. “This approach allowed us to get quick wins and quick value. It was quite different from other implementations that I’ve been involved in.”

Ruch is complimentary of the SSA ERP product and the team that supports it. “The solution was stable, right out of the box,” he says. “We also were fortunate to have very responsive support. I’ve been very impressed with the performance of the development and support community at SSA Global. It’s been fabulous.”

Making it Pay

The payoff for Southeastern Mills has been fabulous, too. “The entire project will be paid for with the savings realized from raw materials procurement,” notes Ruch.

The financial benefits have been supplemented by significant improvements in purchasing, inventory, scheduling, financial management and other major corporate processes. “With the implementation we were able to standardize many functions,” Ruch continues. “Now it is much easier to closely monitor and compare the performance of our individual divisions. Data integrity is much improved because we are managing the business based on ‘one version of the truth.’”

Part of the ERP consolidation involved consolidating the hardware supporting its business onto a single IBM eServer iSeries located at the corporate headquarters in Rome, GA. As the core infrastructure technology, the iSeries provides an improved high availability platform for

Southeastern Mills’ solution. Each division uses a separate partition on the iSeries. Users connect remotely via a virtual private network.

“SSA ERP is the backbone of our business,” says Ruch. “It supports everything we do from procurement through manufacturing to shipment and cash. I’m very pleased and think we made the right decision.”

Forward Faster™ - Into the Future

Southeastern Mills is a company positioned for growth and has major capital projects underway. The SSA ERP implementation is playing a major role supporting the company’s growth strategy. Ruch says that in addition to the core SSA ERP products, Southeastern Mills is exploring use of a number of extension products from SSA Global. He says Southeastern Mills will continue to leverage more functionality in the SSA ERP solution and is looking at implementations of SSA Global enterprise asset management and collaborative order management solutions.

Commenting on the overall relationship between Southeastern Mills and SSA Global, Ruch concludes. “We’re both heading in the same direction. I’m excited about our future with SSA Global.”

about SSA Global

SSA Global is a leading provider of extended ERP solutions for manufacturing, distribution, retail, services and public organizations worldwide. In addition to core ERP applications, SSA Global offers a full range of integrated extension solutions including corporate performance management, customer relationship management, product lifecycle management, supply chain management and supplier relationship management. Headquartered in Chicago, SSA Global has 63 locations worldwide and its product offerings are used by approximately 13,000 active customers in over 90 countries. For additional information, visit the SSA Global web site at www.ssaglobal.com.



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