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Patrick Moriceau
President
La Fournée Dorée

Early Adopter La Fournée Dorée Smells Success with Sage ERP X3

La Fournée Dorée, a young commercial baking operation with production facilities in the Vendée and Lorraine regions of France, specializes in the making of pastries that are distributed for resale in large and medium-sized department stores. With annual revenues of 110 million FF, La Fournée Dorée employs 80 at its two sites.

It all began in September 1997 with the purchase of a small, traditional bakery in the east of France, near Metz. The company's products were sold primarily through small vendor carts in common marketplace areas. But Patrick Moriceau, president of La Fournée Dorée, had bigger plans.

"When we first took over, we continued to cater to our existing clientele, but we soon realized that in order to grow we would need to reorganize and reconfigure our entire operation to encompass a larger distribution area." That aim, said Moriceau, necessitated the establishment of a second manufacturing operation in October 1999. The results were astounding. In two years, company revenues jumped from four to 110 million francs.

To handle its increased distribution activity, the company chose to implement a small sales management package to address its most urgent needs and to allow startup activity on the eastern site to proceed as smoothly as possible. The solution was meant to be a temporary fix as Moriceau looked for an application that could address the company's anticipated accelerated growth and its multi-site requirements.

"We sought an integrated software package that would be adaptable to our specific environment – multi-site with extensive geographic distribution," recalls Moriceau. "I was familiar with several popular distribution packages, all of which were a bit too specialized for our needs." Moriceau's other requirement was that the integrated system would run on the more flexible and less expensive Windows NT platform, rather than the more commonly available AS400 packages.

Having worked with software consultant Sovi in the past, it was natural for Moriceau to turn to them for a solution. (Sovi Informatique had just started to

distribute Sage software.) "I heard good things about Sage ERP X3, which was in pre-launch. But I was not in a hurry, so I waited."

By the spring of 1999, the small management software installed on La Fournée Dorée's eastern site had started showing its limitations and was crashing frequently. "With the second site due to open in October, it was imperative we implemented a distribution management system worthy of its name."

"I renewed contact with Sovi and learned that Sage ERP X3 was now available," said Moriceau. "This system had everything we liked without being too heavy or expensive. We signed the deal over the summer, with the mandate that our new manufacturing site had to be up-and-running in October, even if the latest version of Sage ERP X3 was not yet finalized. I would take that risk to start to build our product and customer bases."

Sage ERP X3 was delivered to the site in the Vendée in October 1999. The rest happened quickly. The parameter setting took place at the same time as the feasibility study and the few unique requirements that arose were addressed immediately. "We shipped the first invoices and added the first accounting entries in mid-November," said Moriceau, "with all requisite users receiving detailed, thorough training on the system."

The Sales and Financial Management modules have been operational since November 1999 on the site in the Vendée, with the eastern site going live one month later. A dedicated line ensures a reliable connection between the sites. Production control will begin soon, with eight regular users.

"I've enjoyed the experience of being one of the pilots for a new system. We've been able to contribute to the overall look and feel of the product, and we were able to direct the development according to our requirements. It's been a true partnership. Sage ERP X3 is exactly the solution we needed – a tool that offers a great deal today with an architecture that will enable us to meet our long term growth targets and keep us heading in the right direction."

