

«Bettereater»-products

The SpecPDM applications platform supports the efforts of Hilcona AG in continuously bringing out new products in the field of fresh and deep frozen products in the convenience foods market. With the modern product development solution SpecPDM, SpecPage provides support in being flexible and creative in the future-oriented growth market of convenience foods. In tune with the mono-brand strategy of Hilcona – «for bettereater».

When Toni Hilti produced the first tinned foods in Schaan in 1935, it was found to be a highly progressive step. In the recipe archive of the Liechtenstein based company, they recently found recipes from the year 1945 for beans and roesti. These production recipes were written by hand and the respective calculations were also done manually. «Today they are almost valuable relics of the company's history,» says Markus Weiskopf, Communications consultant at Hilcona AG. The social circumstances that have led to rapid changes in the living conditions have placed concepts such as diversity, innovation and speed in preparing the meals to the core of all activities. Since quite some time, convenience food has captured the European kitchens. It is just here that Hilcona has been setting trends. «Eat well rather than cook longer» seems to be the central motto; despite that, the bettereater do not want to compromise on quality and taste.

Hilcona's quality is marked by high levels of freshness and taste. Apart from competent quality assurance to develop new products quickly according to the changing requirements of the market, the industry also demands flexibility and inclusion of all possible costs into the costing process. This demand is then to be met by the software that is used. The system that Hilcona had been using since the beginning of the nineties was not in a position to meet the in-

creased requirements that were becoming more and more complex. Sub-modules were not working correctly or not at all. «When we found out that entire recipes were vanishing, it was absolutely essential to quickly find a new solution,» says Pius Calzaferri, technology developer.

Competent quality and optimal costing

The search was on for a product with modern environment that also ensured exact mapping of the development process. SpecPDM offered Hilcona AG just what it was looking for. The solution of SpecPage offered the developer a perfect tool for bearing the responsibility of managing the large variety of recipes to costing. An increased level of cost transparency due to professional management of work plans, production and material costs as well as the option of additional functions such as creating declarations and specifications argued for SpecPDM. «Most of our desires and expectations were perfectly met by SpecPDM,» says Calzaferri to the point.

Shorter development times for innovative products

The initial positive effects were seen almost immediately after the implementation of SpecPDM. The situation in the area of data security eased significantly. SpecPDM could be used to enter data of all recipes, raw materials incl. ingredients, declarations and specifications in a central database and new variants could easily be developed according to customer enquiries. Individual costing could also be done

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Peter Schmidheiny, Head of Development, Hilcona AG



SpecPage

The components of the customs recipes and the respective refunds offered by SpecPDM are a major relief to us in the import/export business. Its inclusion in the costing is a big leap forward that gives us a greater feeling of security in this area.

Pius Calzaferri, Technology Developer ,Hilcona AG

for the specific recipe variant and the integrated maintenance of logs ensured back-tracking.

Along with experts from SpecPage, Hilcona is striving towards perfection even in the case of specifications. Apart from the specifications for finished products and trade goods, there are also customs recipes required for import/export facilities. «The coding of these recipes is totally different from that of 'normal' recipes – only the customs officials can interpret them – not even I can read these recipes,» says Pius Calzaferri with a laugh. SpecPDM provides the concerned clerk with a complete listing of all the required documents – be it veterinary reports or something alike that the product can be exported. Another import aspect for costing is the integrated function of refunds. SpecPDM has directly integrated this into the calculations and has introduced it into the costing. «This is a very big relief.»

High flexibility for specific customer requests

Just on the customer side, Hilcona found that there is an increasing demand for product information. With the help of direct queries, SpecPDM software offers options for individually extracting information according to customer enquiries; this information can then be exported to MS-Word or Excel in the form of reports and can thus be processed externally. This high level of flexibility in SpecPDM in the specifica-

tions area is absolutely innovative. «If we had to offer the entire range of options for specifications without SpecPDM, we would definitely have to employ a few more persons to ensure that all processes are working,» says Calzaferri. Hilcona can now use these manpower resources in other divisions and thus make full use of its investment in human resources.

«The legal side of the food market is so well-tuned that we are flexible to meet all customer enquiries and that is one of the biggest strengths of SpecPDM. This again helps Hilcona to profit to a large extent,» he says to point out another strong side of SpecPage's software.

«Employing SpecPDM in Hilcona is highly extensive but still has not reached the limits.» Hilcona does not use all the tools that have been offered. One of the unused features is the documentation of the development work. «Currently everything is still being done on paper, stored in folders and found back with a large amount of effort,» Calzaferri elaborates on the current situation. Even here, SpecPDM has an excellent module to offer that is waiting to be put to use by Hilcona and customized to their needs.



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