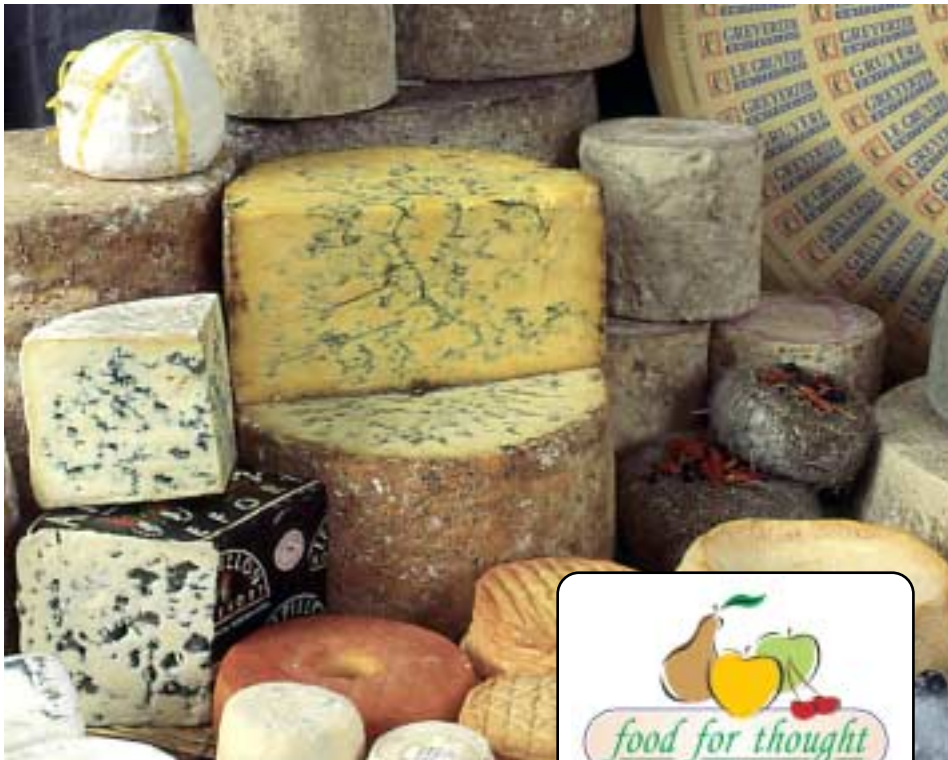


Cheese Cellar's IT matures with Panacea



"From the outset we were highly impressed with both Panacea's approach, skills and ability to understand the business issues we were facing. Panacea's staff clearly stood out from the rest.

They treated us personally, we were not 'just another customer', they could see our problems and the rapid growth we were facing, not least the business impact of not having a fully functioning, reliable system."

The Cheese Cellar Company is the leading specialist cheese wholesaler in the UK with a customer base that ranges from upmarket hotels and restaurants, through to major catering and leisure groups, to air and shipping lines, retailers and other wholesale organisations.

The Cheese Cellar holds some 1,400 lines of cheese which are probably the most extensive and diverse range available from one source in the UK.

The company was founded in 1987 and has grown to the £18m turnover organisation it is today based in a 17,000 sq.ft warehousing and office complex in south west London. As an independent, The Cheese Cellar is the main agent for over 140 leading British and European cheese producers, including Cambozola, Bel, Dolcelatte, Le Roitelet Brie, Chaumes, Port Salut and St. Agur.



LEADING
MID-RANGE
SYSTEMS



Recognised throughout Europe

The Cheese Cellar has four methods of sale: daily 'off van' sales to restaurants, hotels and other catering outlets; customer collection; external carriers and direct delivery - anywhere in the UK.

Both van sales and ex-warehouse delivery is via a fleet of 17 temperature controlled vehicles. Exports are also made to places such as Hong Kong, the Caribbean and, increasingly, to France. Services include ripening, cutting, packing and labelling cheese for its customers. Staff will cut and pack cheese, regularly assembling multi-unit cheeseboards and cutting whole cheeses to exact requirements.



Early experiences

At its inception, the Cheese Cellar had just a single PC running Multisoft for both stock control and invoicing. This grew to a server with 8 terminals and eventually, following a move to Clapham and the acquisition of a cheese wholesale business, to a new server with 16 terminals. Expansion was so rapid that the system was being asked to deal with 100-400 orders a day.

Justin Slawson, Cheese Cellar's Managing Director recalls: "We realised that the system was not coping with the demands being made upon it and that the software and hardware had severe limitations. We had reached a critical point and that we needed to make a change."

Critical phase

Justin continues: "We also knew that we had to change our supplier - the decision was not taken lightly and Panacea was recommended by IBM.

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They treated us personally and could see our problems and the rapid growth we were facing, not least the business impact of not having a fully functioning, reliable system. We were also assured of a smooth transfer between old and new systems.

There is no doubt that Panacea's staff were very professional and on the same wavelength as us.

We also felt that out of all the suppliers we saw, Panacea was most likely to succeed in terms of our requirements and their own future."

The decision was made to order an RS/6000 with new terminals, Sage CS/3 to run the core business system and a 3 year service contract.

A key part of the new system was an industry-specific, bespoke, front-end telesales module to handle stock control and the special requirements necessary to supply widely different weights and cuts of cheese. A number of variables in the link to stock control were required.

Justin continues, "Panacea also kept the Multisoft system running during the development phase and the support was exemplary - everything worked better than it had before."

Performance beyond expectation

More recently, there has been the addition of a comprehensive decision support and reporting system developed by Panacea incorporating its unique Business Objects CS/3 Universe module.

This runs on the system without any reduction in performance and took only hours to upgrade.

It delivers greater speed for telesales where there are now 15 terminals, several PCs and laptops - all sourced through Panacea.

The Cheese Cellar's future plans are to use the old RS/6000 for data warehousing and an NT server as backup for the PCs, reporting and as an e-mail and Web server.

"The whole system has performed to our expectation and covers everything we need. Following 'go live', no further time has been lost and the business can operate secure in the knowledge that our IT systems will work as an essential backbone of the organisation. There is no doubt that we expect a long-term relationship with Panacea and regard them as our future technology partner.

The organisation understands the importance of listening closely to customers, in order to identify and anticipate needs and, subsequently, be able to offer a fast, friendly and reliable service."

The Cheese Cellar



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