

# M&J Seafoods net prize catch with Panacea IT



*"From our first dealings with Panacea, we could see that they were different from other companies. They understood the commercial pressures associated with our rapidly growing business."*

**John Lakin**  
Systems Manager

M&J Seafood is the UK's largest independent seafood wholesaler with a customer base that spans the breadth of the catering industry - from small, independent hotels, pubs and restaurants, to major breweries, hotel groups, shipping lines and national airlines.

With some 1,300 lines of both fresh and frozen seafoods, M&J has 10 nationwide distribution centres, processing factories in Fleetwood and Grimsby as well as supply branches with fresh fish straight from the dockside.

Founded in 1977 by husband and wife team Marion and Jeff Archer selling fish on a part-time basis, the company has grown to employ 600 people and today boasts a growing turnover of £70m.



LEADING  
MID-RANGE  
SYSTEMS



## Keeping us informed

Since its beginnings in the late 1980s, Panacea had always kept in contact with M&J as a Sage user - long before M&J even became a customer.

"I was impressed by Panacea's marketing. They always kept us up to date with what was going on in the marketplace.

That's important to us, we don't have time to investigate things like that ourselves because we are too busy running our business.

Their seminars and workshops were particularly informative and we still make time to go to these today."



### ... from just one computer

Eight years ago, M&J Seafoods were attempting to run their entire company on a single computer.

A move to an RS/6000 delivered a big improvement but the scale of growth at M&J Seafoods was so great that even a series of upgrades through the RS/6000 range were not the real answer to the company's issues. While M&J was growing by the month with large contracts being won in both the shipping and airline industries, symptoms were being treated by system upgrades and reboots. It wasn't until Panacea were approached that the cure was finally suggested.

### The decision

"As our five year contract was coming to an end we knew it was time to evaluate a new supplier. Panacea was already high on the list because of the way they had built a relationship with us over the years. Panacea's commercial awareness and strong sales and marketing knowledge, made them stand out from the crowd of other suppliers.

A meeting with our account manager began to make things clear for us. After careful evaluation of our existing setup and our future growth plans, Panacea specified IBM's parallel SP system.

We met with their pre-sales consultants and discussed planning and installation in detail. Panacea's directors took an active interest in our project and following that stage the decision was made."

### On time and on budget

The new system was installed. "I was amazed, the system went in on time and on budget. Never before had I encountered this kind of service from a computer company." M&J were allocated a project manager who looked after them from start to finish. "Pre-sales consultancy and planning was excellent. Our account manager is a 'doer' not a talker - he gets things done - a trait that is reflected in all of the Panacea staff we have dealt with."

### ... to a 160 user SP system

Today, M&J run an IBM parallel SP 'box' with 160 users logging in 24x7.

"We need this capability, the airline business is 24 hours a day, so we have to be too." The system runs continually with many staff working shifts. The business is very transaction processing intensive with nearly all shipments going out with a priced invoice and despatch note. The SP copes easily with M&J's demands.

The company continues to grow at a considerable rate. Ambitious growth plans project that a new branch is to be opened every year for the next five years with an additional new distribution branch for the North.

"We have just added another 16 users to our system. We recently upgraded to Sage CS/3 and will be implementing a specialised telesales module in the near year. We're also looking at business management information software which Panacea demonstrated to us at one of their food industry executive briefings."

*"Panacea has been responsive, flexible and a real business partner.*

*Choosing them was one of the best and easiest decisions I've ever made."*

**John Lakin, M&J Seafoods**



Panacea Limited, Winton House  
Winton Square, Basingstoke  
Hampshire, RG21 8EN

Tel: (01256) 30 50 50  
Fax: (01256) 30 50 30

[www.panacea.co.uk](http://www.panacea.co.uk)