



NEXTSTEP – As Good As Gold For Dutch Gold Honey

A MAS 90® Distribution And Manufacturing Solution

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Client Profile

The next time you pour a bowl of cereal, snack on a graham cracker, or indulge in a bite of gourmet ice cream, you might just taste gold. Dutch Gold. As the largest independent honey producer in the United States, Dutch Gold Honey, Inc. processes in excess of 50 million pounds of honey each year, distributing it to some of the biggest names in the food and grocery industries. Remember that cute honey bear container from your childhood? It was invented by Ralph Gamber, the founder of Dutch Gold Honey back in 1957, and quickly became a familiar face in cupboards across America. In its fifty years, Dutch Gold Honey has grown from humble beginnings to a thriving modern business. Today, Dutch Gold Honey boasts four business divisions in two states: the original honey packing operation, a maple syrup processor, and two specialized food-service container distributors.

A Sticky Situation

In the late 1990’s, Dutch Gold Honey found themselves in a sticky situation. Their highly customized software, running on the Macintosh platform, offered no flexibility and required a huge infusion of cash just to keep it operational, let alone up to date. Printing was particularly archaic; a single printed page might take 4–5 minutes. Reports were sparse and inflexible. The software’s functionality just was not keeping pace with the growing business. At that

time, Dutch Gold consisted of two companies, and in order to have invoices print with the appropriate corporate name, they had to have two completely separate installations of the software. The software offered no manufacturing capabilities, so this vital business function was completely manual.

In 1997, a search was launched to replace the dysfunctional system. Four packages were evaluated, including MAS 90, Great Plains, and Solomon. As important to Dutch Gold as the software, was the



From truckloads to gallons to bears, MAS 90 sweetens the process

company who would be supporting the software. They did not want to get stung with poor service and support. As they considered each package, they looked at the vendor’s staffing, background, technical knowledge, and even individual personalities. “We needed to know how well they could support a client like us: a bit fussy and demanding some-

times, yet easy and agreeable at others,” recalls Chuck Schatzman, Dutch Gold’s controller.

A Sweet Solution

After careful evaluation, Dutch Gold Honey determined that only MAS 90 offered the off-the-shelf functionality they needed. However, it was the company behind the software that really drove their decision. NextStep’s in-depth product knowledge and service orientation clinched the deal. As Chuck Schatzman puts it, “NextStep is a natural fit for us.

They have guided us capably through the software implementation and server changes.” Two of Dutch Gold’s divisions were immediately implemented, with the other two following within the year.

A Hive of Activity

For the first time, Dutch Gold enjoyed the benefit of automated control of their manufacturing process. Raw honey is purchased from beekeepers domestically and around the world and processed by Dutch Gold. The various costs associated with the processing and packaging are incorporated into the honey’s final cost using the MAS 90 Bill of Materials module. “It’s like day and night from where we were,” says Schatzman, “Everything is user friendly and quick responding.”

Dutch Gold utilizes the ODBC (Open Database Connectivity) driver included with MAS 90 to easily link data from MAS 90 into Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access for further analysis. NextStep helped create production-scheduling spreadsheets that are relied upon daily. This type of data manipulation was impossible with their old system. The ability to use the Microsoft tools, with which the staff was already familiar, has proven to be a tremendous labor time saver.

MAS 90’s built-in security can be configured to allow only designated people into specific modules, and even tasks within modules, providing for very precise access control. Another benefit of MAS 90 is the Customizer module used to easily relabel fields to precisely match Dutch Gold’s unique usage of the software.

Lot control is a critical function when selling a food product. Customers rely on Dutch Gold to identify the original source of the honey, and in the unlikely event of a recall, be able to trace to whom each lot was sold. MAS 90 efficiently automates this process, from original receipt through final sale.

Dutch Gold typically purchases honey by the truckload. Each truck is loaded with 55-gallon drums, weighing 650 pounds apiece.

Ultimately, it is packaged in containers of all sizes, from large buckets to the classic honey bear. Since honey is heavier than water, 16 fluid ounces of honey weigh more than one pound. Truckloads, drums, gallons, pounds, ounces, bears...MAS 90’s flexible and precise unit-of-measure conversion handling ensures that from initial purchase to final consumer sale, inventory is accounted for accurately.

Dutch Gold distributes their honey anywhere east of the Mississippi, via their own fleet of twelve vehicles and through outside freight carriers. Directions to each customer’s location from the warehouse are stored within MAS 90 and associated with the customer masterfile. The directions associated with each route are automatically printed and given to the drivers. “It’s a service we’ve always provided, and MAS 90 makes it easy.”



MAS 90 prints each driver’s route information, making complex deliveries easier

The Future Looks Golden

With MAS 90 proving itself so valuable, Dutch Gold is planning an upgrade to enable all four locations to access the software from a single server, rather than the two LANs currently in place. They are also considering the MAS 90 e-Business Manager suite to promote business-to-business and business-to-consumer sales.

NextStep’s sales and support staff continues to satisfy Dutch Gold Honey. “They arrive when they say they will, and technical questions addressed to NextStep are answered quickly—often within the hour. They are very responsive to our needs. What they do for us works, the first time out. We are very pleased.”

MAS 90, NextStep, and Dutch Gold Honey—the future truly does look golden.

Headquartered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, our firm has specialized in MAS 90 and MAS 200 by Best Software since 1989.

Our extensive experience, exceptional service, and broad expertise assure you of our ability to solve even the toughest business problems.

If you would like to fine-tune your firm’s approach to manufacturing, we would like to talk with you and see if MAS 90 is the right solution for you.



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