

INFOMAN, INC.
Information Management Solutions

phone: 425/673-9299

fax: 425/673-0609

email: info@infoman-inc.com

CUSTOMER:

Fran's Chocolates, Ltd.

Seattle, WA

1-800-422-FRAN

www.franschocolates.com

PARTNER NAME:

INFOMAN, Inc.

Edmonds, WA

www.INFOMAN-inc.com

COMPANY PROFILE:

Type of business:

Chocolatier

Locations: 3 with nationwide
distribution

Employees: 45

Size: \$4.5 million

Users on Accpac: 8

MODULES:

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- General Ledger
- Inventory Control
- Order Entry
- MISys Manufacturing Software

sage
software

Authorized Partner



INFOMAN Makes Business Sweeter for Fran's Chocolates

"I would have never believed how much time and effort goes into a box of hand-made truffles."

Lauren Vogel remembers her amazement when she started working as operations analyst at Fran's Chocolates. "When you factor in the complicated ingredients, exacting recipes and manual labor, the manufacturing process seems like a jigsaw puzzle. We could have never continued managing our growing operations with spreadsheets and raw data alone."

AWARD-WINNING QUALITY

Fran Bigelow started making gourmet chocolates and truffles in a small store in 1982 in Seattle's Madison neighborhood. Today her company includes two retail shops plus a combined warehouse/office space, with nationwide distribution to specialty and gourmet stores.

Handmade quality has certainly paid off. Fran's Chocolates was rated the best overall chocolatier in the authoritative Book of Chocolate, and her caramels have twice received the national Most Outstanding Confection Award. Also, Fran's Pure Chocolate Cookbook was

named Best Cookbook by Food & Wine Magazine among many other honors.

SAGE ACCPAC AND INFOMAN

After a lengthy evaluation process in 1997, Fran's adopted Sage Accpac to automate its financials. MISys manufacturing software manages the operations end of the business. The two systems were skillfully integrated and customized by Fran's Sage Business Partner, INFOMAN.

What would things be like at Fran's without Sage Accpac and INFOMAN? "Scary!" laughs Lauren. "If we didn't have AccPac and MISys Manufacturing, we would certainly need a larger office staff, our accuracy would plummet, our planning and budgeting would be out of whack, and we wouldn't be able to focus on what we do best—make chocolate."

SMOOTH SYSTEM

Sage Accpac automates all accounting functions at Fran's, including payables, receivables, general ledger, inventory control, and order entry. It receives data from MISys, manufacturing software specifically designed to integrate with Sage Accpac.

INFOMAN, INC. Information Management Solutions

phone: 425/673-9299

fax: 425/673-0609

email: info@infoman-inc.com

"We'd definitely need a larger staff, and our accuracy would plummet, if we didn't have Sage Accpac and INFOMAN. We would really suffer without them!" —Lauren Vogel, Operations Analyst, Fran's Chocolates

CHALLENGE:

Complex recipe-based processes required tight integration between manufacturing and financial management systems, to support growth of nearly 15% a year

SOLUTION:

Sage Accpac with MISys manufacturing software, implemented and customized by INFOMAN, Inc.

RESULTS:

Wastage cut by 20%; software has kept staffing needs low; physical inventory counts no longer necessary in retail stores

sage
software

Authorized Partner

"When ingredients are received as raw materials, they are tracked through MISys. We are a recipe-driven company, so we rely heavily on the Bill of Materials function in MISys to calculate ingredient demands, referring to it several times a day. We think of it as the backbone of our entire system, and update it frequently to reflect fluctuations in the cost of goods and packaging," says Lauren.

"Our industry is very seasonal," she continues. "So it's essential that we have the correct ingredients and materials on hand, and the labor force to make it happen especially when we are ramping up for Christmas and Valentine's Day. We also have to allocate carefully for labor costs. Our software lets us do that, to avoid costly mistakes by planning for each season."

TRIMMING WASTE

Once products are packaged, data on finished goods goes straight into Sage Accpac, where customized reports analyze everything from labor to the cost of finished goods. This allows the company to make more informed business decisions.

"We recently tightened inventory at our two retail stores, thanks to the accuracy of the numbers from our financial system," Lauren explains. "Before, we relied on physical counts and many phone calls back and forth between our retail locations—it was confusing, inaccurate, and difficult to plan for given our lead times to make the chocolate. During holidays, it just

gets too busy to be counting and recounting. This has provided our production, packaging, and retail teams with reliable order cycles and product counts."

The management team at Fran's Chocolate appreciates the enhanced control they have over the business, thanks to information Sage Accpac puts at their fingertips. "We feel much more in control with data we can trust," notes Lauren. "We have accurate, real-time numbers that reflect our current position. This is a very powerful tool for improving both day-to-day operations and long-term strategies."

LOYAL FANS OF INFOMAN

Lauren has only praise for her consultants at INFOMAN. "They're really great. We consider INFOMAN to be a true partner in our enterprise, and look to them for solutions for all kinds of business issues. Their expertise is very valuable to us. Plus, we have a good division of labor. We let them be the experts on software systems, and they let us be the experts on chocolate," she says.

"The number-one benefit of working with INFOMAN is their response time. They have a great respect for our hectic schedules, and they're here when we need them. Although our business is complex, they take the time to wrap their minds around finding the best solution for us. They're loyal to us, and we're loyal to them. Also, they have a great sense of humor. Of course, they don't seem to mind the free samples of chocolates we send them every now and again!"