When Bariatrix Nutrition reopened its newly renovated production and warehousing operation in Montreal in 2012, the protein-rich foods and supplements producer understood that the maintenance of its production lines would need an overhaul, too.

The food production facility, which is equipped with multiple production stations, had identified inefficiencies in its management process whereby operations and maintenance personnel had no structure for creating work orders and personnel had no formal way of knowing what work needed to be completed.

“We have one bar line where we make our chocolate bars. We have a two other production lines for powdered goods – for drinks – and we have another production line for soy chips,” explains Christian Ledoucheur, System Administrator, Bariatrix Nutrition. “We had spares lists that were neither interactive nor integrated with the ERP system. No one knew what to do and neither was work checked.”

But in January 2013, after the plant’s executive management and IT department had installed an enterprise management and accounting applications solution (SAGE ERP X3), the decision was made to augment the ERP system with a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS).
The ERP system would help Bariatrix achieve operational excellence by integrating production, sales and logistics. Further, to enhance reliability and efficiency through better maintenance practices, the company enlisted the services of DIMO Maint, a CMMS solutions provider. Their Mini-Maint solution would not only seamlessly integrate with the Sage ERP solution but would also help prevent personnel from re-entering data and eliminate potential sources of error between the commercial management and the CMMS.

While the application is used mainly by the mechanics department (maintenance personnel) to plan and schedule maintenance tasks, the system’s requester function is used across departments, including the production, quality control and shipping departments, for tracking the health of the machinery.

The CMMS includes all of the standard functions, says Adeline Perrudin, Business Developer North America, DIMO Maint. This includes the inventory and classification of equipment, the management of contracts, the management of work requests (WR), the automatic management of preventive maintenance (PM), the management of work orders (WO), stocks of spare parts ordered and budgets, as well as a graphical schedule of maintenance tasks, and the production of analyses and dashboards.

**BENEFITS OF A CMMS**

The CMMS brought immediate benefits to the maintenance function, says Ledouceur. It was easy to use and scalable. The system allows maintenance mechanics – the primary users of the CMMS – to create work orders, schedule tasks, identify and describe the problem with equipment, assign a specific mechanic to do the work and ensure that the requisite spare parts are available to complete the work.

Once the work has been completed, finance and inventory management are simultaneously updated on the status of the work. The CMMS is also useful to the finance department, as the CMMS system tracks every action and maintains the history (“a single version of the truth”) for auditing purposes, says Ledouceur.

“The integration of the CMMS with the ERP application is where we get the most value,” says Ledouceur. Everything we buy through a Purchase Order is going to be added to our inventory and everything we consume in our inventory is taken out through a Work Order transaction so that the finance department can know where we’ve used this part.”

The ERP manages inventory in a way that gives the finance department access to information on such things as the valuation of the spare parts. When plants use disparate systems, it makes it much more difficult to know what is maintained or what the real value of inventory is. But an integrated system makes auditing easier when the audit is due. “It tells us how much we spend on spare parts in a year and cuts down on work orders while giving us visibility in our ERP,” says Ledouceur. “Nothing is forgotten.”

“One success factor since implementing the CMMS is that it provides control, says Ledouceur. “We wanted control over what was happening in our business, over costs, spares, work orders... everything. That was the goal of the project.”

**SYSTEMS INTEGRATION**

The number of employees has grown to 150 from 65 since Ledouceur started in his role in Bariatrix Nutrition’s Montreal plant four years ago. In addition, the company is undergoing growth at its distribution and logistics site in Vermont, New England, where it employs 20 people. The facility is currently being converted into a production and manufacturing plant, which means that the number of employees is expected to increase substantially once manufacturing, production and support roles are created, says Ledouceur, who is tasked with expanding the ERP system across the organization.

Fortunately, the Vermont site uses the same ERP system as the Montreal plant. “They’re using it from our facility over a VPN connection. So for me, implementing the CMMS in the new site means buying a site license,” he says.

Bariatrix has purchased an additional module from DIMOMaint that includes an application for segregating data from one site to another. Bariatrix will also need to decide which data they want any department to see, says Adeline Perrudin, Business Developer North America, DIMOMaint.

“Bariatrix already had the basic option – rights management – but now, adding the segregation option will allow a manager to say, ‘I want my maintenance team in Vermont to see equipment and spares that are in Vermont; I don’t want them to see what’s happening in Montreal,’” explains Perrudin.

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Ledouceur says that the system enables Bariatrix to transfer parts between buildings through the ERP. “And I will have traceability of where my equipment went.”

While Ledouceur is unable to share data on cost savings, he says that Bariatrix has realized operational, logistics and maintenance efficiencies. “It’s been very efficient to the bottom line, which is a cost saving for us.”

**BUILDING ON THE SYSTEM**

As a next step, Bariatrix is simplifying and facilitating entry of field data. Maintenance mechanics currently use iPads to fill in requests on their Web page, but Bariatrix has purchased MiniMaint’s latest upgrade (version 7) in order to take advantage of its mobile application, says Ledouceur.

“Maintenance will be able to open and close work orders from the machine and won’t need to go back to the workstation to do that kind of transaction,” says Ledouceur. “This is going to be another big step for us to save time.”

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