



The mandate:

- Provide timely, accurate, weekly forecasts
- Provide Sales, Marketing, and Finance with an aggregate monthly forecast
- Provide longer term demand forecasting for the manufacturing of aged cheese products

Ault Foods Ltd. is one of Canada’s most successful food companies, with annual sales of over \$1 billion. The Industrial Division of Ault Foods manufactures dairy products, encompassing over 1,000

consulting, process re-engineering and training. Integration of the PC-based forecasting system with the AS/400 based CA-PRMS manufacturing system was a requirement. For Karen Liedtke, Forecast Coordinator, the major

“The development of a forecasting process was considered as critical to achieving excellence in production planning. We believe that the TimeTrends product was an outstanding choice to help us attain this objective.”

Susan Dineen, Director, System Development and Support

SKUs, and well-known brand names such as Black Diamond Cheese.

A mandate was initiated to improve the forecasting process that drives manufacturing systems. Specifically, this entailed generating weekly forecasts for production, while providing Sales and Marketing with useful decision support numbers. Senior management felt that improving forecast accuracy could result in significant savings, by reducing work-in-process, inventory and unsaleable product levels.

Ault chose Hunter Business Consultants, Inc. (HBC) of Mississauga to supply a complete solution comprising the **TimeTrends**[®] forecasting system,

advantages of **TimeTrends**[®] are its ability to import promotional indices from Microsoft Excel, as well as its user friendliness and ease of setup.

The promotional and pricing influences on the business were extensively analyzed in terms of expected impact on baseline volumes. These were incorporated to generate final forecasts. The result is a weekly set of forecasts, generated by Marketing in Etobicoke, which are transmitted to the production plant located in Belleville, ON.

System integration issues included extracting sales history from the AS/400 and downloading it to the Novell network for updating the forecasting database.

Forecast processing is done within **TimeTrends**[®] which then exports the resulting forecasts in a format suitable for uploading back to the AS/400. Several exception reports were developed on the AS/400, as well as at the PC level.

The results have been dramatic. A sample study of key promoted SKUs, (previously forecasted monthly), were tracked for 22 weeks to measure compliance with a target error margin. The compliance of the test SKUs increased from a previous benchmark of 40% to over 50% on a weekly basis. In other words, accuracy increased significantly, while at the same time quadrupling the level of detail. Other benefits include improved customer service, improved product quality and rotation, and inventory reduction. According to Susan Dineen, Director of System Development and Support, “...the TimeTrends product is helping Ault obtain the winning edge and focus on its most important asset—its customers.”



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