

Helping Foodbrands to Improve Logistics Operations

Creating Solutions and Managing the Details

AT A GLANCE

Foodbrands America, a major manufacturer and marketer of frozen and refrigerated products, did not have adequate logistics infrastructure to accommodate the major growth it had recently experienced through acquisitions. Therefore, Foodbrand turned to an outside project management firm to make a transition from a multiple-site, fragmented logistics infrastructure into a new state-of-the-art 450,000-square-foot distribution facility.



By turning to the outside, Foodbrands also tapped external supplemental management resources and creativity to develop and implement solutions that would address its complex distribution challenges.

The Situation

Foodbrands America, a major manufacturer and marketer of frozen and refrigerated products, services nationally recognized foodservice, retail and refrigerated convenience food companies such as Dominos Pizza, Sysco, Fleming, and Alliant Food Service. Foodbrands had experienced three solid years of double-digit growth, and by 2000, the company was moving nearly

\$1 billion in products a year, according to Dick Buell, President and COO. As a result, the company's existing 175,000-square-foot, 16-dock-door central warehouse and four auxiliary distribution facilities in Kansas no longer were adequate to accommodate the company's exhaustive logistics needs.

The Challenges

Foodbrands had grown to the point that its order fill rate was problematic, which consequentially translated into a poor line fill and case rate. "The long and short of it is that we had insufficient square footage, too few of pallet positions and too few of dock doors to accommodate

our growing business," says Buell. Because Foodbrands didn't have the internal management resources to develop and implement solutions that would address such a complex situation, Foodbrands decided to turn to the outside for help.

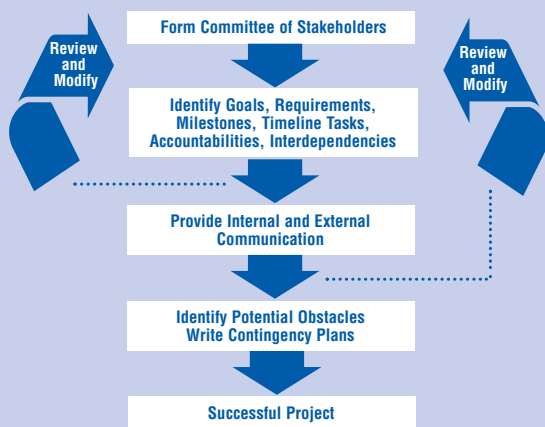
The Solution

Solertis, a firm that offers strategic and tactical process design and implementation of operational initiatives, helped Foodbrands to significantly improve their logistics processes and operation, and to transition its operations into a state-of-the-art 450,000-square-foot distribution facility recently built in Kansas City.

ROAD MAP TO SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Strong project management requires fluid communication and close attention to details. At any point in the process tasks and goals can be reviewed and modified.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY



Solertis helped Foodbrands make this transition from a multiple-site, fragmented logistics infrastructure that it had outgrown to a sophisticated product flow strategy through this single comprehensive DC. This project reflects the growing trend to turn to the outside for help to improve efficiencies and reduce costs involving the flow of materials and products.

"Originally, Foodbrands had set a target date of making the transition to be in November," according to Ann Elliott, Solertis' president and CEO. "By following the Project Management Methodology and monitoring the progress of the new facility's construction, we convinced Foodbrands that this would be a bad business decision—particularly because November was the beginning of their busiest season. Because we had an unbiased perspective from the outside, we were able to lend them insight that ultimately led to a smart business decision."

Solertis offers strategic and tactical process design and implementation of operational initiatives. This Atlanta-based company specializes in warehousing, distribution, transportation and facility design solutions, with a special focus on critical logistics solutions.

By postponing the transition until March of the following year, Solertis was able to coordinate additional training, process redesign, and systems upgrades that were required for an efficient, seamless transition into the new facility. In fact, Foodbrands was able to maintain a 98 percent case fill throughout this transition process.

Buell predicts Foodbrands now fills 44,000 pallet positions moving through 54 dock doors through this new facility. "Our program has become much more complicated in this new facility because there are many more things going on simultaneously," says Buell. "With more dock doors, we're shipping and receiving in parallel—as opposed to series—and our workforce had to make that adjustment. Solertis helped in the training, discipline and systems to make this more complex situation easier. They brought the analytical, intellectual and execution skill sets necessary to create the process flow we needed in this new facility."

Solertis contrasts from most other consultants in that it provides strategic advice but also implements recommendations made, according to Ann Elliott. "We provide the strategic vision a company needs in a complex situation like this, as well as potential solutions," she says. "But we take it a step further than most in that we roll up our sleeves and implement our ideas on behalf of our clients. Oftentimes they simply do not have the resources or expertise to do it."

"Many of the larger consultants tend to be a little more esoteric and a little more strategic, which is not always what you need," adds Buell. "In our case, Foodbrands didn't need a strategic study, we needed a facility execution plan. Solertis provided the leadership, experience and supplemental resources we needed for such a complicated project."



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We don't just recommend, we implement.