



AppFinity Delivers Innovative and Easy-to-Use Online Ordering Systems that Empower Walker Foods' Employees and Customers

AppFinity's Web-based Solutions Plus CharterHouse's IT Expertise and Support Mean Dramatic Gains in Efficiency and Accuracy for Walker Foods.

Los Angeles-based Walker Foods, Inc. (<http://walkerfoods.net>) has the unique distinction as both the first company to produce salsa in the United States, and the first to make salsa in America to be exported to Mexico. The company was founded by James Walker in 1905 and has remained a family-run business ever since, now under the direction of Robert Walker, James' grandson.

Lack of System Integration Impedes Flow of Data Between Departments

For many years, the various departments at Walker Foods had worked independently of each other, with information from one department not readily accessible to any other. According to Walker Foods' IT Consultant David Reyes, "Shipping was not integrated with sales or our accounting personnel. People couldn't see what others in the company were doing. It became clear that we needed a fully integrated system in place that could envelop every part of our operations and streamline business processes. We had to let go of some tried-and-true procedures that just weren't efficient enough to keep pace with the growth we were experiencing."

AppFinity WebCustomer Streamlines Order Processing for Employees and Brokers

In late 2005, on the advice of CharterHouse Software, the company's IT consultants since 1979, Walker Foods took the first step in upgrading its business systems by purchasing the VAM/SQL accounting system developed by AccountMate Software. With VAM/SQL's easy user interface, everyone, including novice computer users on staff, immediately became comfortable with the new system and the company benefited from much-improved coordination among departments.

The next step was to increase accuracy and efficiency in the ordering process for the company and its fast-growing number of customers. "We typically handle between 20-100 orders per day and every one of these must be processed 100% accurately or we risk running into problems," claimed Reyes. "Let's say that a customer places an order for five different products with different quantities for each. If any part of the order is entered incorrectly, we could end up shipping the wrong item or the wrong quantity, leaving us with an unhappy customer and a mistake that needs to be corrected right away. What we needed was an online system to facilitate the entire ordering process for our customers and employees, eliminating input errors and delayed shipments." Walker Foods turned to CharterHouse for a solution and got the answer they wanted right away—**WebCustomer** from AppFinity Software. With its Internet-based quoting and ordering functions, WebCustomer enables customers to place orders directly into their VAM/SQL Sales Order module

online whenever they want. This solution provided the best opportunity for Walker Foods to increase the accuracy of orders placed into the company's system, and significantly reduce administrative and sales support expenses.

"We implemented this system a few months ago and we haven't had one problem yet," said Reyes. "When our customers enter their own order information online, they have full confidence that their order will be processed and shipped immediately. They don't have to worry about details such as correct item numbers, pricing or timely delivery of orders. A great feature of the WebCustomer system is that after a customer submits an order, they receive an e-mail confirmation within minutes that their order has been received. A little later, they receive a second e-mail confirmation stating that their order has been approved, with delivery or pickup date included."

Sales Force Enjoys Instant Access to Customer Data with AppFinity WebSalesForce

Another AppFinity solution that has generated significant benefits for the company is its **WebSalesForce** Web Ordering System. WebSalesForce enables Walker Foods' sales people to use their laptops (when an Internet connection is available) to place sales orders and quotes for their own customers directly into the company's VAM/SQL Sales Order module from any remote location. When they are on the road, sales people can now see any information they want on their customers' orders and accounts. Typically, for any customer, they might want to check on the frequency of delivery, most recent orders, open orders, payments to date, open invoices, or look at the overall history of an account since its inception. According to Reyes, it won't be long before the company furnishes its sales force with mobile PC-type devices to make it even easier for them to view customer data from the road.

Where's That Signed BOL?

There was one more recurring issue that Walker Foods management wanted to resolve—employees at its customer service desk were spending too much time looking around for signed Bill-of-Ladings (BOLs). They were tired of initiating collection calls only to hear a response of, "we cannot find proof of delivery."

Once again, management contacted CharterHouse, who immediately engaged AppFinity to develop an integrated solution that would incorporate a "touch-screen" hand-held device to display a standard Bill-of-Lading and capture the receiver's signature. This electronic document could then be saved in the company's accounting system for future hard-copy printing or sent via electronic transmittal as an email attachment or a fax. AppFinity developers responded to this challenge with its innovative **eBOL** (eBill-of-Lading) solution. **AppFinity eBOL** utilizes the latest PC Tablet technology with the Samsung Q1 PC Tablet, which features a very compact design (just 1.7 lbs.), ultra-mobility (WiFi or Bluetooth) and the full functionality of a notebook running XP Pro.

Initial tests of the eBOL system received rave reviews from the shipping department. According to Reyes, "We can now call up a signed BOL for any customer's invoice, which greatly enhances our customer service performance and efficiency. Plus, the system is so straightforward; our delivery people learned how to use it in minutes. Each eBOL involves three signatures: 1) The forklift operator who loads the truck, 2) the truck driver (either our driver or the customer's) and 3) the security guard. With all these checks in the process, we have much better inventory control and very few mistakes."

Since 1979, CharterHouse Has Provided Walker Foods with First-rate Service and Support

David Reyes has nothing but praise for the level of service Walker Foods receives from CharterHouse Software. “Even before I arrived here, CharterHouse had long since earned a tremendous reputation for their attentiveness to our needs and superior IT expertise. Everything I have seen during my tenure supports this reputation. CharterHouse always goes out of their way to make sure that our business systems are working up to their capabilities and if anything is amiss, they are here in a flash to correct it. Without them, our jobs would surely be harder.”

About AppFinity Software

AppFinity Software Corporation (San Francisco, California) is dedicated to the design, implementation and support of e-commerce solutions that leverage existing technology investments and minimize ongoing IT costs. AppFinity solutions are fully customizable and can integrate with most existing commercial Web sites and today’s most popular accounting software systems to deliver complete business solutions that enable companies to focus on their goals without exhausting precious resources on unnecessary IT expenditures. AppFinity is driven by a relentless quest to provide an extraordinary level of customer service that is peerless in today's fast-paced, high-stress business environment. To learn more about AppFinity Software, visit www.appfinity.com

About CharterHouse Software

Since 1978, CharterHouse Software Corporation (Westlake Village, California) has consistently positioned itself as a technology-driven company that has helped many clients with networking and custom software solutions for their businesses. CharterHouse holds dozens of copyrights for PC-based software and has licensing agreements with some of its clients. CharterHouse technical support staff has been installing and maintaining Novell's products since the release of NetWare 2.0. CharterHouse currently has serviced over 70,000 clients coast to coast. The company’s products include CharterHouse-developed and “best-of-breed” in the storage, networking and accounting areas. Services include consulting, programming, wireless, video and complete installation and support. To learn more about Charterhouse, visit www.chsoft.com

About Walker Foods, Inc.

Since 1905, Walker Foods, Inc. has been producing some of the world’s finest salsas. Founded by James Walker in 1905, this family-run business is currently run by James’ grandson, Robert. The company occupies its original site in the heart of the Los Angeles metro area. Walker Foods’ distribution of its products has expanded from the Pacific states to include the greater Southwest and Midwest. To learn more about Walker Foods, visit www.walkerfoods.net