



PROCESS DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDY

North Side Foods Expedites Customer Responses and Case Resolutions with *i-Sight Quality and Corrective Actions*

“Before, it was hard to respond to every customer within a two-day turnaround. Now issues go through the right channels and we consistently hit our two-day target.”

— Shannon Isaacson
Quality and Technical Services Coordinator

Customer name: North Side Foods, part of the Smithfield Foods Family

Challenge:

- The lack of workflow, email and notification capabilities slowed issue resolution and customer responses.
- The company’s basic database lacked user friendly statistical analysis.
- Complaints did not follow a detailed path to resolution.

Solution:

- With i-Sight, users and sales reps across the country manage and view customer information in real time.
- Workflow management ensures issues are assigned and routed to the correct managers automatically, and that all relevant parties are notified.
- The team sorts and reports on cases by insurance claim type, type of complaint, by plant, by distributor, and more to see trends and take corrective action.
- Customer Expressions provides valuable customizations and responsive support.

Results:

- Sales reps deliver better service with an up-to-date understanding of all customer issues.
- Corrective action ultimately reduces costs and increases customer satisfaction.
- The team now consistently hits its two-day customer response target.

You may not have heard of North Side Foods, but there is a good chance you have sampled its great-tasting meats. From some of the largest restaurant chains to schools to your local grocery store, the company’s quality pork sausage products can likely be found at an establishment near you.

North Side Foods, part of the Smithfield Foods Family, has been making meats for nearly 100 years. Family owned and operated, and now in its fifth generation of business, North Side began as a family butcher shop and is now a leading food service provider. It is a major supplier of fully cooked sausage to the food-service industry under the Ember Farms label, and offers its products in retail stores under the Smithfield Premium and Gwaltney brands.

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THE CHALLENGE

In nearly a decade of business, North Side has established a reputation for quality. In fact, ensuring its foods are safe and delicious, and delivered on time and intact, rank as the top priorities. To that end, North Side tracks all customer complaints and comments related to its products in order to take corrective action and improve service.

Until 2006, North Side managed customer complaints with a basic database. The lack of automated workflow, email and notification capabilities slowed issue resolution and customer responses, and the application lacked the user friendly statistical analysis.

"It was hard to ensure that claims were handled in a timely manner. Issues were not getting through the channel fast enough," said Shannon Isaacson, quality and technical services coordinator. "We needed to develop a complaint management process and flow that identifies key case owners for different types of complaints."

Without a standardized workflow, complaints came in to various staff members, rather than being centralized. Additionally, the company desired a way for sales reps nationwide to view the status of customer issues.

THE SOLUTION

North Side Foods evaluated a variety of solutions before selecting i-Sight Quality and Corrective Actions from Customer Expressions, a customizable, web-based solution to track safety, quality and delivery issues, and create and implement corrective and preventive actions (CAPA).

With the web-based format, North Side users and sales reps across the country manage and view customer information in real time. It offers workflow management to ensure issues are assigned and routed to the correct managers, and automatic notification and alerts. Compared to other options North Side considered, i-Sight is also easier on the company's budget with an annual subscription, rather than one upfront fee.

The Customer Expressions technical team provided the initial setup and customization to match North Side's workflow. As configured, the solution gives three North Side team members the ability to change the status of issues, while all other users can just view the data or receive notifications.

Automated Assignment and Notification

Workflow rules in i-Sight automatically assign complaints and issues to case owners based on type. For example, one case owner handles all types of complaints for specific national accounts, while others manage damaged cases and late trucks, or insurance claims and safety audits. If a case owner is out sick or on vacation, he or she indicates that in i-Sight, which automatically routes cases to a backup person.

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Likewise, i-Sight automatically notifies key stakeholders about issues of interest to them, taking the burden off of North Side staff to inform team members manually. For instance, if an issue is related to one plant, that plant manager and an assistant vice president would be copied.

Auto email notification also ensures that cases never go too long without proper action. Owners receive an email notification every day indicating the date that a customer response is required. The team's goal: Within two days, respond to the customer with a letter indicating the source of and action to be taken on their issue.

Analysis, Reporting a Click Away

With i-Sight, the team keeps together every piece of information related to a case, and has a centralized and current view of all cases at its fingertips. "At any time, we know exactly who manages each case, and the number of days a case has gone," Isaacson said.

The team also taps into analysis and reporting capabilities to sort by insurance claim type, type of complaint, by plant, by distributor, and more – enabling it to identify and troubleshoot recurring issues. As needed, North Side or Customer Expressions team members create additional report types.

THE RESULTS



With i-Sight, North Side has a standard workflow to ensure that the team communicates with each other and customers, and closes every case satisfactorily. North Side also pinpoints and reduces recurring issues through correction action.

"If we can improve and take corrective action, that ultimately reduces costs and increases customer satisfaction," Isaacson said.

Most notably, the team now consistently hits its two-day customer response goal. "Before, it was hard to respond to every customer within a two-day turnaround. Now issues go through the right channels and we consistently hit our two-day target," she said.

Beyond the product itself, North Side truly values its relationship with Customer Expressions, and the support it receives. As North Side's needs change, Customer Expressions helps the company tailor i-Sight to match. Next the Customer Expressions technical team will link sales reps to their specific districts so they can see and report on only their own customers.

"The Customer Expressions customer service and support representatives are exceptionally fast," she added. "They get back to me within hours. I love working with them. They deserve kudos for their quick response time."