



## Blends for Friends scales up production with Advanced ERP and MRP solution

Blends for Friends was founded in 2006 in order to provide the world with highly personalised and custom-made tea blends to give as a truly unique gift for tea lovers. We have ambitions to grow and scale production, and our IT Manager, Chris Sullivan, knew it was time for change. The organisation needed a system that would bring all aspects of the business together and make it easier to record crucial information.

In 2018 Blends for Friends selected Business Cloud Essentials, Advanced's ERP & MRP solution designed for manufacturing SMEs. Bringing in the solution meant that we could eliminate the amount of manual entry of data into our CRM system, move away from spreadsheets and collate all information in one place with a real-time view.

### Time to ditch the spreadsheets

Since our company was founded in 2006, Blends for Friends has been steadily increasing in both volume and complexity. We started with a couple of spreadsheets supporting the business, however in recent years this has led to thousands of spreadsheets in circulation across multiple teams and departments.

The spreadsheets were separated from each other, creating the need for duplication of work and increasing the risk of manual errors. It also resulted in long and inefficient processes, as we must constantly confirm the data used is the most up-to-date. This was a key driver which pushed us to look for a solution that could

replace the spreadsheets which were holding back our organisation.

### Bringing the business together

The other downside to using spreadsheets was that there was no connected view of the business as a whole. Our team wanted to be able to see how the business was performing, however having data in disparate areas didn't allow for that. Data was inconsistent, inaccurate and hard to get hold of, meaning there was no true representation of the business as whole and there was inconsistency of information.

### Gaining control over stock

As a drinks manufacturer, one of the things which is key for success is having visibility of stock in order to understand what needs to be ordered in and when. Without a business system that supported this requirement, we were never going to have a clear view of what stock was available and where, which in the long run harms customer perception.

### Client >

Blends for Friends

### Sector >

Food & Drink  
Manufacturing

### Project >

Improve business performance by bringing systems together as one

*"Though the prospect of implementing a system to help consolidate our data was raised many times during the years, it was always put off. Any immediate issues were given "quick fix" solutions that have added to the vast array of spreadsheets."*

Chris Sullivan > IT Manager >  
Blends for Friends

# Blends for Friends scales up production

## A solution fit for food & drink manufacturing

After conducting some research on available products in the market, it soon became clear to Chris and the team that a lot of products were not suitable to fit the specific needs of a drinks manufacturer.

*Chris says, "Being a drinks manufacturing company we began looking at products available on the market and we were impressed with the choice. However, it quickly became apparent that our very specific needs and processes were incompatible with nearly all available systems, the majority of them being focused on hospitality, and requiring an unobtainable amount of customisation to meet our core needs."*

*Chris says, "With Business Cloud Essentials we were initially impressed with the broad capabilities of the base system, with the optional inclusion of User Defined fields to handle a number of our more bespoke needs. Since it is a fully contained package it will allow single entry of data in nearly every case, which will significantly reduce workload and increase efficiency."*

The flexible nature of Business Cloud Essentials reassured the team that this was a solution perfect for the complex needs of a food manufacturer. During initial discovery meetings, Chris and his team were taken aback by the depth of functionality in the solution and the benefits this could offer. Chris adds "During walkthroughs with the sales and design team at Advanced, we were able to work out how some

of our more problematic applications could be integrated into the system with clever use of the existing framework. In nearly all cases it exceeded our expectations, and with the robust roadmap planned for Business Cloud Essentials we can look forward to further integration in the future."

## Looking ahead

We are already planning what the future might look like with Business Cloud Essentials. Bringing our business together doesn't stop here, we are already exploring what other elements of the business can be brought into the system.

*Chris sums up, "We are hoping to integrate more of our systems with Business Cloud Essentials as the facilities become available - of particular interest are Warehouse Management options. With the refinement of our processes, and additional facilities available with the system, we are hoping to have all aspects of our company integrated."*

## More information

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