

## Customer Case Study

# Dade Service Corporation



### **Dade Service Corporation Uses Prolog® Software to Standardize Project Management, Cut Costing Time by 50% and Increase Sales by Improving Service Delivery**

Founded in 1954, Dade Service Corporation specializes in the design and construction of facilities and rooms for the produce and cold storage industries, including ripening rooms and perishable distribution facilities. Headquartered in Daytona Beach, Florida, this fourth generation, family-owned business serves clients throughout the United States. Dade Service is a multi-disciplined organization that offers a wide range of products and services to meet each client's individual needs. The company can serve as a design-build contractor, ripening room or cooler installation subcontractor or as a materials provider. Dade Service also designs, sells and services state-of-the-art, energy efficient ripening, cooling and control systems for the produce industry.

Dade Service has an impressive client list that includes trusted brands like DiMare Fresh, Chiquita Brands International, Fresh Del Monte, C.H. Robinson, Whole Foods Market and Calavo Growers. In 2011, the company received recognition from the Produce Marketing Association for 20 consecutive years of involvement with the organization. Most recently, Dade Service received a "Sales Achievement Award" from Century Refrigeration for their exemplary sales achievement.

Dade Service purchased Prolog Manager from Meridian Systems nearly 10 years ago, but the software was never really implemented. Instead, the company used complex Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for managing critical tasks, like costing and sales tax reporting, and used Outlook for project communications. Duplicate data entry, the possibility of Excel errors and the lack of a centralized project information repository were just some of the day-to-day challenges of project management.

When Dade Service was awarded a number of new projects, they were driven to re-evaluate their methods for managing projects. To handle the increased project load without affecting customer service or increasing the company's fixed overhead and labor costs, the company needed to improve their project management infrastructure.

"The way we were doing things was very inefficient," explains Dade Service Sales and Marketing Coordinator, Ashley Perryman. "Information wasn't kept in one central location, so tasks were taking way too long. We didn't have a way to track punch lists and costing was being done in spreadsheets, so there weren't as many checks and balances as we would have liked."

**"By giving us better control over our time and projects, Prolog software has increased the value of our biggest selling point, which is the high level of service we provide to our customers."**

*Ashley Perryman, Sales and Marketing  
Coordinator  
Dade Service Corporation*

## A Revolutionary Project Management System

In addition to taking a fresh look at Meridian's Prolog solution, Dade Service evaluated a number of other project management systems. "Ultimately, we concluded that Meridian's Prolog Manager and Prolog Converge applications would best address the inefficiencies we were experiencing," Perryman states.

To ensure that the company's Prolog solution was fully implemented this time, and that the software resolved their many project management challenges, Dade Service hired Project Team Solutions, Inc. (PTSI), a consulting firm and Meridian Value Added Reseller (VAR) based in Chantilly, Virginia. Dade Service took advantage of PTSI's six-month Unlimited Professional Services Agreement, which gave them access to nearly every service offered by the consulting firm, including training, report writing and other implementation support.

A phased roll-out of the company's Prolog software gave the Dade Service employees time to adjust to the new project management system. Document Management and Field Administration functions, like submittals, requests-for-information (RFIs), meeting minutes and hot-list items, were implemented first, followed by Cost Control capabilities, such as costing and change orders. Prolog software is now used by nearly everyone in the company. Project coordinators are the heaviest users of the system, entering and tracking all types of information on a daily basis. Field superintendents use Prolog Converge, and for the office manager and project managers, Dade Service has developed customized Prolog Today dashboards that provide project status snapshots with drill-down options.

With PTSI's help, Dade Service is working toward standardizing all of their project management processes, forms and letters on Prolog software. "Every one of our projects is different, but having companywide standards ensures that information is captured in our Prolog system the same way for every project - from beginning to end," Perryman says. "PTSI has revolutionized the way we use Prolog software. Working with them has been a great experience."

## Setting Standards in Innovative Ways

With Meridian's Prolog software and PTSI's consulting services, Dade Service has completely transformed their project management processes - and more improvements are still to come. The company now has a centralized system for managing project information and standardized processes for every employee to

follow. "When you go into Prolog you know what you're going to see and where you'll see it," Perryman says. Excel errors are a thing of the past and Dade Service now has the checks and balances needed to ensure accuracy at every level of project management.

Perryman notes that one of the biggest benefits of the company's Prolog solution is less redundancy. "It used to take so much time to get things done because we had to use several different applications to complete one task," she says. Now, Dade Service easily completes those same tasks in Prolog software. The company has even developed unique and innovative ways to save time while increasing accountability. An example of this can be found in the field, where project superintendents and field staff now stay connected using Prolog Converge.

In the past, getting completed timecards back from the field wasn't always easy. Timecards were mailed or e-mailed to the office, often late or with errors, and had to be corrected and re-entered before costing and payroll could be processed. Dade Service now requires that employee time be included in Daily Journal entries made in Prolog Converge. A special report pulls those hours into a customized timesheet that is routed to each employee via Prolog Converge, where it can be reviewed and approved in the software.

This mandatory process has eliminated duplicate data entry and timecard submission delays. "It is also making field staff more accountable for the accuracy of information they're entering into the Prolog system," Perryman points out. "Hours worked are more accurately applied to the job tasks completed, too, which improves the accuracy of our costing."

## Streamlining Workflow, Improving Collaboration

While the timecard management example illustrates how Prolog software can be used in creative ways, the value of streamlining everyday tasks is also significant, especially with the influx of new projects. "If we hadn't implemented Prolog Manager and Prolog Converge," Perryman states, "we would have had to hire additional project coordinators just to keep up."

The ability to e-mail information directly from Prolog, for instance, saves an enormous amount of time by reducing extra steps. Another example is the Prolog software automated reminders, which allow staff to automate report distribution. "We can schedule a report to be automatically

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generated and e-mailed to key recipients," Perryman explains.

In addition to saving time, the software is helping Dade Service save paper. Before Prolog, managing project costs using big binders of paper and manually matching printed invoices to purchase orders was time consuming, not environmentally friendly and stressful. "When we were using Excel, we had to print out invoices, match them to the printed purchase order, put them in a binder and cross reference them, too," Perryman explains. "Prolog software has eliminated this manual work. Our time spent on costing has easily been reduced by 50 percent and we have reduced our use of paper by 50 percent as well."

Prolog software helps the accounting department, too. Since the company serves clients all across the U.S., accounting staff had to track the various sales tax rates and monthly amounts due in Excel. This information is now automatically tracked in Prolog and a simple monthly report accurately outlines, state-by-state, what taxes have been paid and what amounts are due.

Other ease-of-use features, such as the Prolog software search capabilities, provide quick access to specific project information and streamline common, repetitive tasks. However, the solution does more than

ease the Dade Service workload. "We are beginning to use Prolog Converge as a collaborative tool for sharing information with project owners," Perryman explains, "and are putting security protocols in place to collaborate with subcontractors, too."

### **Prolog Contributes to Customer Satisfaction**

Now that Dade Service is benefitting from Prolog Manager and Prolog Converge, they are excited by the additional process improvements that lie ahead. The next innovation being discussed with PTSI is the possibility of building a custom Prolog software database to track sales tickets so that product sales can be separated from project management.

Until then, one thing is certain: PTSI has already helped Dade Service actualize many Prolog software results that position the company for growth. "By giving us better control over our time and projects," Perryman concludes, "Prolog software has increased the value of our biggest selling point, which is the high level of service we provide to our customers."



## Dade Service Corporation Project Profile



### Latin Specialties Distribution Facility Located in Houston, Texas

The design of Latin Specialties' new state-of-the-art produce distribution facility is striking and unique, both inside and out. The exterior was influenced by the view of a plantation field from 30,000 feet in the air. The interior has been designed to maximize efficiencies through carefully selected workflow and layout planning.

Dade Service Corporation was selected by Latin Specialties as a subcontractor for the Houston project. In this role, the design-build contractor contributed to the internal design and build-out of the facility. The project was a natural fit for Dade Service because it aligned with the company's philosophy of "Doing things right and differentiating ourselves from the competition."

For the new facility, Dade Service constructed multiple coolers, a process area and ripening rooms. "While we are very happy with every member of the vast team that helped us in the construction of this... new facility," states Latin Specialties' Jorge Vazquez, "we are especially happy with the performance of Dade Service... We would highly recommend using Dade Service to any company looking to expand in the produce industry."

#### Key Project Elements

- › Facility size approximately 60,000 SQ FT
- › Installed two state-of-the-art pressurized Ripening Rooms



- › Provided design and construction services for coolers and process room
- › Oversaw subcontractors necessary for complete cold storage installation
- › Utilized high efficiency cooling units

#### Project Completion Date: Spring 2012

**Results:** By tripling the size of the company's operations and providing an enhanced layout that is specially designed to increase efficiencies, the new Latin Specialties distribution facility will improve customer service and profitability. Dade Service worked closely with Latin Specialties during all phases of the project, ensuring that the end result fit what the client envisioned. According to Vazquez, Latin Specialties is highly satisfied with "the level of professionalism, knowledge and experience of every member of Dade Service."