

TYPE  
**CASE STUDY**INDUSTRY  
**FOOD & BEVERAGE**LOCATION  
**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

# **DOWNEAST CIDER ACHIEVES MILESTONE RESULTS WITH PLEX MES**

New England-based Downeast Cider is the number one craft cider maker in the United States producing about 125,000 barrels of cider a year. Launched in 2011, the cider producer had been using small business tools to run its operations and recognized a need to formalize processes and documentation. They launched Plex with help from Revolution Group. Founded as Revolution Software in 1995, Revolution Group today serves companies in various industries through its Managed IT and Plex Services divisions.

## **RESULTS**



Single source  
data visibility



Record  
sales



Reduced inventory  
carrying costs by 10%



Reduced cost of  
goods sold by 17%



We didn't have real systems. We used about 50 spreadsheets to run our business. We outgrew those tools and were looking for ERP solutions to help us modernize our information technology.



**GRAINGER FLINT**

Director, Supply Chain, Downeast Cider

## LIMITED TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT RAPID GROWTH

Downeast Cider engaged Revolution Group to support its digital transformation efforts. Revolution Group is an IT and ERP consulting firm that specializes in driving digital transformation at small to medium-sized businesses.

"All of our customers produce products that have to meet a high level of quality standards. All of them require traceability from

the raw material to the finished goods," explained Pat Welsh, Director, Manufacturing & ERP Consulting, Revolution Group.

"Downeast Cider came to us with a classic set of problems that we see over and over with small businesses that have grown quickly. Inventory control was at the center of those challenges," Welsh continued. "If inventory is not accurate and you're not able to trace and track inventory, and particularly in the food and beverage industry, that can cause a ripple effect across the whole organization."



## **PLEX MES POSITIONS CIDER MAKER FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS**

Working with Revolution Group, Downeast Cider implemented the Plex Manufacturing Execution System “to bring us into the 21st century and set us up for success in the future,” Flint said.

Change management with rigorous training was a priority for the implementation.

“We were putting in a system where we had no systems before,” Flint explained. “We made sure to invest the right amount of time into training to get the team ready to go live and to understand how the new processes would help make us better.”



This is huge, especially for a small business that's trying to grow rapidly. We went from not having lot traceability and not having quality check sheets to now every single step of our process has some history, so we know that each step is being done correctly and we have a quality product.



**GRAINGER FLINT**

Director, Supply Chain, Downeast Cider

## RECORD SALES AND DOUBLE DIGIT COST SAVINGS

After a six-month- implementation process, Downeast Cider went live on Plex in April 2023 without having to shut down production.

“We had great buy-in from both upper management and the operators on the floor,” Flint said. “Having a regular system that everyone knows how to use is a significant win. Now we have all our business systems under one roof within Plex.”

“The Downeast Cider team embraced implementation. They applied the resources and prioritized the effort at the right level to be successful,” Welsh added. “They understood what the long-term value would be not only in each functional area, but also across the organization.”

Just one month after Plex adoption, Downeast Cider reported its largest sales month ever. Since then, they've reduced inventory carrying costs by 10 percent and the cost of goods sold by 17 percent.

### ABOUT PLEX

Plex, by Rockwell Automation, is a leader in cloud-delivered smart manufacturing solutions, empowering the world's manufacturers to make awesome products. Our platform gives manufacturers the ability to connect, automate, track, and analyze every aspect of their business to drive transformation. The Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform™ includes

solutions for manufacturing execution (MES), ERP, quality, supply chain planning and management, asset performance management, production monitoring, process automation and analytics to connect people, systems, machines and supply chains, enabling them to lead with precision, efficiency and agility. To learn more, visit [www.plex.com](http://www.plex.com)