



## Janes Family Foods

From the moment Lem Janes Sr arrived in Canada in 1948, he has been a key player in the frozen food industry. A food technician in his native Estonia, Lem Sr took a laboratory job in Canada developing frozen food technology with one of the largest fishery operations on the East Coast.

In 1960, he became production manager for an Atlantic fish processor with responsibility for product development. He was the first to produce frozen breaded and battered seafood products in Canada. He developed much of the machinery used in the production process.

In 1969, with two partners, he founded Grimm's Foods. They set up operations in 6,000 sq. ft. of leased space in Concord, Ontario, and began producing frozen breaded and battered seafood products for the food service trade. The 1970s were a time of rapid growth; in 1979, sales reached \$6 million. The same year, his family, the Janes, became sole owners of the company.

During the 1980s, the company began marketing products under its own food service label and expanded into breaded chicken, cheese and vegetables. A federally inspected plant was added to produce chicken products for retail and food service customers. In 1989, sales reached \$20 million and facilities had expanded to 82,000 sq. ft.

In 1992, a major strategic change occurred with the launch of a premium quality line of retail branded products. A nine-item retail product line packed in 2 lb. boxes was introduced under the trademark "Janes Family Favorites." The company name was changed to Janes Family Foods Ltd. (Janes), reinforcing the commitment to this new brand. The line is now comprised of more than 25 premium quality items, and enjoys distribution through most major retailers in Canada.

After three decades of rapid growth, the management team at Jane's recognized that in order to manage the projected growth and success of their company into the future, they needed to make some changes in how they managed the business.

In 1999, Janes began the process of evaluating the MRP systems that were available in the marketplace. "We needed a fully integrated MRP system that would handle all aspects of our business - including lot trace ability", says Craig Stevenson, IS Manager. "Our whole business cycle starts with our forecast, so we needed to re-engineer our forecasting methodology, and integrate it with an MRP system. With accurate forecasts, we would make better purchasing, scheduling, and resource allocation decisions.", continues Stevenson.

Janes was very impressed with the Visual Manufacturing solution presented by Shop 9000 Sales Inc. "We loved the planning and scheduling window. We knew right away that the system would provide us with the information and tools we needed to make informed decisions", Stevenson says. "We also liked the database engine. Visual runs on an Oracle database, which is very robust. With our continual growth, we knew we needed a system that would grow with us", continues Stevenson. But most important to Janes was the customer reference ability and access to local support. "We wanted to be sure that the system would really deliver the results we were promised" says Stevenson "so we called 25 local customers. They were all very pleased with the product performance, and rated the support services provided by Shop 9000 as first rate."

Janes made the decision to implement the Visual Manufacturing Solution in March of 2000. Today, VISUAL is live and running in two of Janes' facilities, with the third in the implementation phase. When asked about the implementation, Craig has this to say: "The implementation phase was phenomenal! The two consultants we had from Shop 9000 were top notch. They worked with us throughout the entire implementation and really became part of our team." says Stevenson. But that doesn't mean the implementation was easy for Janes. "We knew what we wanted to achieve out of the system. We had specific goals in mind. We also knew that we would face many challenges along the way." Stevenson continues.

Hard work - that's what really made it successful for Janes. They knew what they wanted out of the system, and they put in the effort required to meet their goals. Another key to Janes's success was their dedication to employee training. "We wanted to be self sufficient, and we wanted our people comfortable with the system. So, we literally trained our staff until they were 'VISUAL experts'." says Stevenson. Since implementing VISUAL, Janes has seen dramatic improvements in the areas of inventory control and customer satisfaction. "We now have complete visibility of our inventory levels. We can see what's being produced and what we have on hand.", says Stevenson "We also have better tools to predict our future requirements.", Craig continues. "We used to have trouble seeing what was there before, and as a result had to carry higher levels of inventory to compensate. Since implementing VISUAL, we have been able to significantly reduce our on-hand inventory."

For Janes, this is just the beginning. After the third facility is operational they are planning to implement labour and material barcoding, and the Visual Quality Suite.

## Company Overview

Janes continues to be a staple in many Canadian freezers today. They currently have three manufacturing facilities, two specializing in frozen foods, and one fresh. Their flagship product line (Janes Family Favorites) is seen on the shelves of many grocery stores, and many more of their products are packaged and sold as store brand products for companies such as Sobey's, National Grocer, A&P, Presidents Choice, Longo's, and Costco.