

The ABC of smoothing out a production export path

When you're New Zealand's largest grower, packer and exporter of apples a smooth journey from orchard to marketplace is essential.

Mr Apple New Zealand Ltd owns 14 orchards across Hawke's Bay, totaling 900 hectares and producing more than two million cartons of apples each year. The company sources a further million cartons of apples from more than 50 growers around Hawke's Bay, and apples are primarily destined for the export market.

Helping Mr Apple streamline its systems and succeed on the global stage is ABC Software Ltd, a Hawke's Bay-based custom software development company that specialises in supporting companies like Mr Apple.

Deregulation of the New Zealand apple industry in November 2001 was the catalyst for Mr Apple, formed from the grouping of Grocorp Pacific Ltd, Hawke's Bay Apples Ltd and Red Apple Packhouse Ltd.

Prior to deregulation ENZA controlled the marketing and sales of the entire New Zealand crop. Only in recent years have growers been able to market and sell a portion of their crop to overseas markets.

Today, Mr Apple's widespread success is evident, but five years ago it was struggling with inefficient pack house and logistics computer software that was ultimately constraining the company's growth.

In an effort to streamline the systems Mr Apple contacted ABC Software to develop customised pack house software and owner Sharon Chapman says they relished the challenge of creating software to increase efficiencies for the company.

Brave move

"Looking back, it was probably a brave move for Mr Apple to take on a small Hawke's Bay company for such a large job but five years on the results speak for themselves," says Sharon.

Mr Apple CEO Andrew van Workum says they always had faith ABC Software would deliver what it needed.

"Right from the start we could see they were highly-experienced, skilled business analysts and software developers."

Since then ABC Software Ltd has delivered systems to allow Mr Apple to effectively manage its fruit from the orchard to the pack houses and cool stores, onto the markets and through to customer invoicing and grower payments.

Sharon Chapman says the systems were designed to ensure data was entered once only. All parts of the system are fully integrated thus giving Mr Apple a holistic and complete view of its business in real time.

Reports' efficiency

The documents and reports published from the system are professional, timely and accurate and as evidenced by very positive feedback from both growers and customers.

ABC Software Ltd continues to help Mr Apple improve productivity. A recent cool store acquisition meant Mr Apple required a software solution specifically designed to manage the logistics of the cool store operation.

"This project started late in the year and put tremendous pressure on those involved, the implementation and operational results have exceeded expectations and budgeted throughput volumes," says Andrew.

And the current season required a new system to help manage Mr Apple's 600 overseas returning seasonal workers (RSE). This system manages the employee's reimbursement of expenses to Mr Apple plus compliance reporting. Again ABC Software was able to successfully respond to Mr Apple's needs in the ever-changing marketplace.

"It is exciting to be part of Mr Apple and to be delivering results that make a difference for them," says Sharon.

Andrew van Workum says the relationship Mr Apple has with ABC Software is the type of business relationship a company is always looking for.

"They work with us to find a solution, rather than trying to tell us what we need."

design
development
implementation
support

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business partner

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We've been helping the fruit industry for over a decade, creating software that makes a measurable difference.

*It's our job to
make yours easier.*

 **ABCsoftware** LTD
CUSTOM SOFTWARE SPECIALISTS
delivering results

"We have been working with ABC Software for a number of years adjusting our pool payment programme to specifically meet our requirements and keep up with our ongoing growth.

We have found their skilled team to be extremely adaptable to our changing needs and responsive to any changes we require during the season."

CHRIS DILLON – Managing Director Fruitpackers (HB) Co-operative Ltd.