

Fall Creek Flexibly Scales Global Operations via Saltbox Integration Platform



Food technology leader shifts focus from ERP
to integrations for business transformation



ABOUT

Fall Creek is an Oregon-based company with a keen focus on blueberry genetics, plants, and grower support delivered to the world's premier blueberry growers. In business for nearly 40 years, the company aims to build A World with Better Blueberries™.

Fall Creek runs wholly-owned nurseries in Mexico, Peru, and Spain and has a global team of breeders, researchers, propagators and nursery professionals, grower support technicians, sales and customer service experts. They support customers throughout North, Central, South America, Greater Europe, Asia, and North Africa. Fall Creek's primary mission is to serve blueberry growers with best-in-class genetics and plants, technical know-how, and global market intelligence. Visit them on the web at www.fallcreeknursery.com.



Disparate systems and data restrain global operational efficiency

Like many high-growth businesses that expand internationally, Fall Creek has built out multiple databases and enterprise information systems over the last several years. As of early 2020, the company has six different, stand-alone databases dedicated to inventory, royalty agreements, supplier information, customer data, and country-specific business/product requirements.

The information residing in each database has become increasingly vital to employees operating on separate continents. The time and resources required to input data into each database were costing Fall Creek operational speed and efficiency. Each data entry could take up to 30 minutes because users had to log in and out of all six databases. “We have so many items with thousands of codes, so it was taking up all of our time, literally hundreds of hours per year”, explained Michael Domagala, Fall Creek’s Network Manager.

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Moreover, adding a simple product variety often requires the creation of 30-40 additional SKUs. “That’s where our world was getting much more complicated and burdensome”, added Mark Dietz, Information Technology Manager at Fall Creek. “We needed a single version of master data that gets input once and automatically gets replicated for use worldwide”.

To that end, Mark and Michael sought to integrate all six databases with their ERP system, SAP Business One. The goal was to enable users to input data once and automatically propagate globally via SAP Business One.



The need for an integration platform

If Mark and Michael could achieve their goal of having all master data reflected in SAP Business One, they knew that would present the following opportunities to transform Fall Creek's business operations:

- Replicate master data in real-time between all subsidiary companies worldwide
- Streamline planned expansion in Africa and Asia
- Speed global inventory updates to optimise revenue
- Integrate master data with Salesforce CRM to grow sales
- Consolidate financials via a worldwide chart of accounts mapped to localisation requirements
- Leverage new, innovative data sources to flexibly improve the business

Unfortunately, as Fall Creek reviewed solutions to integrate their various databases into SAP Business One and SAP Business One to other enterprise systems, they ran into a significant obstacle. "One-off integrations can each be a hassle and expensive", said Mark. "We had so many business-worthy integrations in mind that we needed a way to get them all done faster and easier". With a bit of research, he came across the Saltbox integration platform. Saltbox was designed and built by Vision33 to be the ideal integration platform for SAP Business One.

Soon after engaging with Vision33, Fall Creek had installed Saltbox and was ready to tackle their first project – gaining a master data repository integrated with SAP Business One.



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Driving efficient global scale-out

Fall Creek initially worked with Vision33 to implement and use Saltbox. In just a few weeks, Fall Creek had integrated their master data and replicated it between all their subsidiary companies worldwide through that brief collaboration. They use their US-based database as their master and do not allow changes elsewhere to maintain global data control. Yet, the Saltbox integration gives them the flexibility to add in virtually any workflow or functionality. “We’re now replicating some other master data tables with rules and flows in place to activate/deactivate certain items as circumstances require”, said Michael. They recently added a workflow that pushes a table of their patent data information out to various locations for tag printing, eliminating the need to log into the other databases.

As for the integration results, Fall Creek has turned hundreds of hours of Item Master data management into just 10-20 hours per year. “We went from just like item master stewards. Now, we can do more strategic things”, laughed Michael.

Since Saltbox is easy to learn, Michael and another team member continuously add functions and workflows to the master data integration with SAP Business One. As a result, they plan to implement the integration of financial consolidations and the ‘Business One / Salesforce CRM’ integration on their own. “It’s nice to know we can call Vision33 for expert help if needed, but it’s even better we can do it ourselves”, said Michael. He explained that developing a global chart of accounts mapped to localised requirements would be more logically performed on their own due to the upfront manual tasks. “The manual mapping is the hard part. Optimising it with automation and Saltbox will be the easy part as we move forward”.

As for the Salesforce integration, Mark noted the value of Saltbox’s pre-built Salesforce connector. He said it would allow his team to integrate business partner contact data and keep orders synchronised between the ERP and CRM systems.

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Unexpected cost savings delivered by Saltbox

Mark cited cost savings as another advantage of the Saltbox platform and one that was unexpected. First, in preparing for the financial consolidation integration to Business One, Mark noticed that Saltbox does not charge on a per-transaction basis. Since he plans to do a monthly consolidation with many transactions, he expects to save money over other methods.

Saltbox is also saving Fall Creek money on its ERP-CRM integration. Before discovering Saltbox, Mark had started down the path with a different vendor to integrate SAP Business One with Salesforce. He quickly cancelled the project because it began to appear too time-consuming and prohibitively expensive.

The other significant savings for Fall Creek will come from using Saltbox to integrate a new iDocuments purchasing management system with SAP Business One. Since Vision33 owns Saltbox and iDocuments, Mark plans to use iDocuments innovatively. “We’re going to move the independent engine of iDocs to Saltbox. That’s another API we don’t have to install and one less thing for us to manage”, said Mark. Fall Creek will realize further savings due to Vision33 serving as the one-stop-shop for iDocuments and Saltbox. Rather than purchase a large number of professional licenses for iDocuments, Mark can buy a smaller number of licenses for master users and let other employees use the ERP integration with SAP Business One to enter purchase requisitions. “Using Saltbox right there would pay for our iDocuments licenses several times over”, said Mark.



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Saltbox vs. ERP as the true enterprise system

Saltbox’s ability to integrate a wide variety of data, apps, and systems into SAP Business One ERP changes the way people view integration platforms. “It’s starting to look like the integration platform could be the centre of what we do”, said Mark. “It gives us the flexibility to adopt new ways of doing things as we look to grow and offer new high-value products and services to our customers”.



Vision33 (www.vision33.co.uk) helps growing companies deliver on the promise of technology through enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions, including SAP Business One and Sage Intacct, automation, and integration solutions. Vision33 has the people, processes, and technology to help businesses solve everyday challenges and seize new opportunities for growth and transformation. With proprietary solutions such as iDocuments and Saltbox, Vision33 helps businesses leverage the right transformative technology for their digital transformation journeys.

Europe

52 Grosvenor Gardens,
London, UK SW1W 0AU
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7284 8400
info@vision33.co.uk
www.vision33.co.uk

Canada

210 Water Street, Suite #400
St. John's, NL A1C 1A9
Tel: +1 709 722 7213
contact@vision33.com
www.vision33.ca

United States

6 Hughes, Suite #220
Irvine, CA 92618
Tel: +1 949 420 3300
contact@vision33.com
www.vision33.com

