



CUSTOMER STORY

AFP advanced food products llc.

# HOW A LEADING FOOD MANUFACTURER ACHIEVED SCHEDULING STABILITY

*AFP worked with Phenix to unlock hidden production capacity*

## IN A NUTSHELL

**Industry**

Food Manufacturer

**Challenges**

- Scheduling complexity
- Overtime

**Solution**

Integrated, structured, planning and scheduling process with Product Wheel Scheduling and Phenix Planning and Scheduling software.

**Outcome**

- Better sequencing
- Fewer line changeovers
- Less overtime
- Transfer of skills and knowledge

AFP is a food manufacturer headquartered in New Holland, PA where its main plant is situated. AFP is one of the world’s foremost foodservice, co-pack and private label manufacturers of aseptically packed cheese sauces, puddings, dips and soups. AFP, an operating subsidiary of Savencia Fromage & Dairy, has a reputation for convenience, service, and quality.

AFP experienced substantial company growth over the past few years creating schedule complexity. After a year of using Phenix Planning and Scheduling software, the Plant operations and Planning Teams have seen the results in fewer line changeovers, better sequencing of orders, and savings in inventory and overtime costs.

**35%**

drop in overtime

**67%**

decrease in Saturday runs

**200**

reduction of major line changeovers

**2%**

reduction in production hours



## CHALLENGE

*High cost of production, overtime, scheduling disruptions, quality and service issues*

At the main plant in New Holland PA, AFP was experiencing regular scheduling disruptions and difficulties in managing line changeovers, which created unnecessary yield losses, leading to a high cost of production. They run multiple main lines, and processing systems with many different sequencing rules. Just one product example: Retail cup pudding involves over 100 stock-keeping units (SKUs), many different formulas and pack combinations.

AFP was planning their schedules based on meeting their customers' expected service levels. To enable them to achieve these, staff had to work overtime during the week and on weekends. This was taking its toll on everyone; AFP needed to create more reliable work schedules.

AFP recognized they would need to make a change to their planning and scheduling practices. They understood sequencing but did not have the tools to improve it, so they contacted Phenix Planning and Scheduling to help.



## SOLUTION

*A formal planning and scheduling process using Product Wheel methods and expertise*

Product Wheel scheduling using Phenix software was implemented. A Product Wheel is a regularly repeating pattern of production; it is a proven approach to bringing stability to scheduling and increasing manufacturing capacity using existing resources.

A pre-requisite for the success of the project was the joint agreement/documentation of production strategies between AFP Plant Operations and Planning. The project started with a value stream map of the operation and a discussion of the factors that impact changeover time and operating efficiency. Products that ran well together were grouped into families, and families were assigned to production lines. A sequence of formulas and individual part numbers within each formula was developed for the best efficiency possible. The sequence and line assignments were arranged so that upstream processing units could be dedicated to the production

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*The Product Wheels methodology combines scheduler knowledge with operational needs for the most efficient scheduling outcome.*

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**Demand Planning Manager  
AFP**

lines for as long as possible, minimizing complex piping and valving changes. Time and placeholders were reserved in the sequence for Make to Order and R&D requirements that cannot be forecasted.

The Master Scheduler could look forward to improved schedules, fewer changeovers and less overtime.



## THE OUTCOME

*Better sequencing, fewer line changeovers, less overtime, transfer of skills and knowledge*

The Phenix solution delivered a reduction in the number of line changeovers, reduced overtime and allowed AFP to manage significant increase in volume throughput. Sequencing reduced the risk of errors due to reduced changeover complexity and lessened the opportunity for errors in batching and mixing. Sequencing allows buffering, so AFP was able to plan contingency products that plant management could pull ahead if it ran well or cut if running behind, without having to contact the scheduler. With the increased efficiencies, it became more common to be ahead of schedule than behind, and weekend overtime was mostly eliminated, improving employee job satisfaction. Production execution of the schedule is now simpler, and the management team can focus more on other important tasks rather than constantly watching for changeovers.

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*It has done wonders for the plant personnel – it improved the morale for 2nd shift because overtime and working into the night rarely occurs.*

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**Plant Superintendent  
AFP**

AFP experienced some added benefits: improved transfer of scheduling knowledge embedded in the tool, reduced inventory levels and employee job satisfaction, all while maintaining customer service levels.

AFP now has an agile operating model with a regular pattern of production to support growth. Phenix automates much of the everyday scheduling tasks and provides a clear dashboard of data essential to successful scheduling execution. Schedulers can now focus on critical issues such as equipment failures or rush orders.

AFP has been able to increase volume and complexity throughout the transformation, staying true to its three mission pillars: customer service, quality, and innovation.

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*Phenix has improved our Master Schedule's job so that she can do more in less time. This makes a real difference when we have unexpected changeovers.*

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**Plant Superintendent  
AFP**

Changeovers and incorrect inventory levels waste significant time and money. Phenix Planning and Scheduling uses product wheel and inventory design to minimize the impact of changeovers and optimize inventory, cutting production time and cost dramatically.

Visit us at [www.phenixps.com](http://www.phenixps.com) to learn how we help manufacturers level up their production strategy and execution by balancing service, inventory, and efficiency to gain a competitive edge – each and every day.

PHENIX



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