

www.semillsfoods.com / Headquarters: Rome, Ga. / Employees: 500+ / Specialty: Gravy, baking and seasoning mixes / Fran Smith, VP of supply chain: "We literally launch a new product every day. We have a large and creative culinary group within our business that partners directly with major consumers for joint product design."

Changing *the* Chain

Southeastern Mills' supply chain leader is revamping the company's processes. *By Kat Zeman*

Southeastern Mills is expanding its distribution footprint, improving visibility and flexibility with suppliers and customers, and shortening lead times.

Maximizing efficiencies in

the supply chain is an ongoing challenge in many industries today. Businesses and organizations are reviewing, renewing and revising their processes to supply their end-users with products and services more efficiently and at a reduced cost.

In the past, dedicating an entire department to the supply chain was common only among large corporations. Today, small- to mid-sized businesses are seeing its benefits, too. Rome, Ga.-based Southeastern Mills is among those companies that are starting to increase their focus on supply chain efficiencies.

In 2016, the company created a new supply chain leadership position. "Most of the company's supply chain functions were in place to some degree, but it didn't have a supply chain leader," says Fran Smith, who took over the leadership role as the company's vice president of supply chain.

INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENT

Since taking over, Smith has been on a mission to revamp the company's supply chain processes. One change he's already made is the optimization of its SAP system to tie various functions together. The ERP software enables companies to better run their business processes by creating an integrated environment among its various departments, customers, vendors and



distributors. "It allows everyone to share information," Smith says.

To optimize the new system, Southeastern Mills hired Naperville, Ill.-based Reveal, a firm that specializes in comprehensive, end-to-end SAP-centric supply chain management services. "Reveal stabilized the implementation and helped us customize for our businesses," Smith says. "It took our company through the first phase of SAP optimization and it has driven a lot of value for us."

Smith's goals for Southeastern Mills' supply chain include expanding its distribution footprint, improving visibility and flexibility with suppliers and customers, and

shortening lead times. "We are continuing to expand on our year one successes," Smith says. "We expect double-digit, inventory reduction each of the next few years and we are evaluating and compressing our lead times."

Southeastern Mills' average lead time to get its products to the market is seven days. Smith wants to decrease that number to five within two years.

MIXING IT UP

Southeastern Mills is known in the food industry for its range of complete ingredient solutions for food processors, foodservice companies and consumers. Its product lines

include coating systems, seasonings, food bases, soups, sauces and gravy mixes, breadcrumbs and baking mixes.

"We literally launch a new product every day," Smith says. "We have a large and creative culinary group within our business that partners directly with major consumers for joint product design."

Southeastern Mills' Center of Innovation, completed in 2006, is designed to facilitate its product development and commercialization processes. The center features laboratory, culinary, pilot plant and office space.

Louisiana Hot Sauce and Better Than Bouillon are two of Southeastern Mills' major brands. Two-thirds of its business comes from selling industrial food ingredients and the rest is generated through retail outlets. "There's a good chance that if you get breaded chicken somewhere in the country, we've provided the breeding," Smith says.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Southeastern Mills operates under a "high-performance workplace" philosophy. The company believes that people, as opposed to buildings and equipment, determine whether an organization will succeed.

It fosters an environment that is based on eight elements that define how company employees should interact with one another and serve its customers. "We have a very unique culture that drives what we do," Smith says. "It's truly people first. We make decisions in an open environment. For instance, we don't have time clocks; it's all self reported. That's how we are wired. Trust is a big thing."

Trust, in fact, is the first element. The other elements include positive assumptions, eliminating negatives, training and development, open two-way communication, employee involvement and competitive wages and benefits. The company's newest element is performance improvement and focuses on safety, quality, lean manufacturing and product lifecycle management systems.

"We are a fourth-generation family business but we're professionally managed," Smith says. "And we are recognized as an industry leader in what we do." 🌱

Reveal When Southeastern Mills wanted a strategic partner to help them achieve greater value from their investment in SAP, Reveal proved to be a perfect fit. Reveal transforms and optimizes supply chain oriented organizations that run SAP. Our proven methodology, ongoing Value optimization® (oVo®) enables organizations to realize tangible business results thru the smart use of SAP. Committed to ongoing education, continuous improvement and sustainable innovation, Reveal helps organizations optimize inventory while improving customer service. Uncovering the potential of the supply chain is what we do. Improving lives is why we do it. We are proud to be a partner of Southeastern Mills.

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Reveal has the privilege of helping many organizations achieve real value through the smart use of their SAP System. **Southeastern Mills** is just one of those companies that has tackled many challenges to only improve their performance levels and make the necessary changes to improve their business' demand. Because of their hard work and continued dedication to the oVo® Methodology, they benefit from the following:

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- Turns improvement of over **23%**
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- Improvement in Operational Service Levels by over **75%**
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- Aligned KPIs to business objectives

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