



**WICKED KITCHEN SPICES UP GO-TO-MARKET
EFFICIENCY WITH CENTRIC PLM™**

**PLANT-BASED VEGAN CONVENIENCE FOOD COMPANY WICKED KITCHEN
SELECTS CENTRIC PLM TO DRIVE EFFICIENCY
INTO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**



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“Right now we’re managing everything by Teams and through spreadsheets. From experience, I know that those systems can be unwieldy once you start just dumping data in.”

Registered Dietitian and Director of Quality at Wicked Foods, Jess Kolko describes the state of product development at the Minneapolis, Minnesota food company. “We’re such a small company personnel-wise, but we have over 140 products in the UK. For the moment, we don’t have all those available in the US, but in order to manage all of that information, we needed a system that we trust to house all that information.” Today, the different functions have access to the information they need, communication is smooth and efficiency is up. How did they improve their workflows?

A WICKED START

Wicked Kitchen was founded in 2018 by brothers Derek and Chad Sarno, executive chefs and brothers with a mission to help people to eat more plants. This speaks to their philosophy that eating plants is better for people, better for the planet and all who live on it. But aside from being healthy, they’ve designed their products to be bursting with flavor, texture and taste. Fast forward to 2019 where Wicked reached the 10 million-units-sold milestone of plant-based foods within just 16 months of launching their line at Tesco. This established Tesco as the market leader in plant-based food products. In 2021, Wicked debuted its US business, rolling out nationally in Sprouts Farmers Market and at Kroger stores plus other smaller retailers that purchase the products through warehouses. Says Kolko, “We are forming our own company here in the US and aspire to be the best-known vegan company in the world.”

NOT MISSING A BEAT

Product development for the US business is fast, since it is based on many of the products in the UK. For the initial SKUs, the formulations, packaging, regulatory, food and beverage label requirements and certifications need to be adjusted for the US. Kolko says, “We launched 25 SKUs in just under six months!” The 10 million units of product sold in just 16 months in the UK bodes well for the US business; if food and beverage product trends hold true, US consumers too, will be clamoring for Wicked Kitchen’s delicious, vegan dishes. Wicked has positioned themselves at the forefront of consumer wants, developing new food products for a changing marketplace.

In order to keep up the rapid pace, Wicked knew that they needed excellent data management. “There’s a ton of information that is managed currently in multiple different places and by various different people. And sometimes is not updated as quickly as we need it to be updated, or it’s updated in one place, but not all the other places,” says Kolko. “I really wanted to start us out on the ground floor with a good, comprehensive PLM to help us grow as quickly and successfully as we possibly could, making sure that we have our data in a usable, easy-to-find format that multiple people can access so I’m not just the single gatekeeper of all of this information. We want people to exchange information with one source of truth for the whole company.”



“ CENTRIC PLM IS THE SYSTEM WHERE WE STORE ALL OUR INFORMATION. SPEED TO MARKET IS KEY FOR US ESPECIALLY ON THE NEW PRODUCT INNOVATION SIDE, BECAUSE WE WANT TO KEEP FRESH WITH OUR RETAILERS. ”

CHALLENGES

- + Fast US launch of a large number of SKUs
- + All data in spreadsheets, pdfs
- + Teams didn't have a good way to access data
- + Exchange of information not efficient via email, files, shared drives
- + Hundreds of ingredients + packaging materials

THE EVERYTHING SOLUTION

Centric PLM serves as an ingredient management solution but it handles so much more than that. "It's everything from formulation to ingredients to storage instructions, shipping instructions, what temperatures product needs to be kept at when shipped, artwork cutter guides, all the way through to finished packaging, including all of the back-of-pack and case-pack information, the UPCs, all the master case UPCs," Kolko says. "It's the supplier, where our products are co-manufactured, their addresses, their production facilities, their certifications, as well as our product certifications. It really is all the data about our products."

Kolko goes more in depth, "We've got hundreds of documents that were floating around for each of our suppliers. All of our raw materials and specifications. And those were just dumped in a Teams folder, unrelated to the product itself. They were just kind of there. That made me nervous. We had an item data master spreadsheet with a section of items that had strike-through text, and I didn't know what it meant. And I wondered why something is in italics? And why is this one red and this one blue? There was just a mess in a giant spreadsheet."

"With PLM, we can get it all into a system that works and is easy to manage. Now we can actually associate the data to a specific product and make sure that we have all of our ducks in a row."

CENTRIC IMPLEMENTATION TEAM TO THE RESCUE

Of the implementation, Kolko says, "I thought implementation went really well. The folks on the configuration team did an awesome job working with me. At one point, I had a giant lightbulb go off, and I realized I needed a hundred other attribute fields. The Centric team said, 'Okay, let's do it.' And by the next meeting, they were done! It was pretty awesome to be able to work with folks who were so responsive and willing to listen. I would tell them that 'I don't know how to say this in a language that you understand. So I'm just going to talk and give you a use-case scenario. And then you're going to help me figure out where this data is going to go in the system.' They are very, very kind and helpful and were fine with that."

Kolko gives an update, "I'm almost done with data population. I'm super excited to be getting the products and the data in. Then we'll be building out the ingredients and nutrition panels for each of the food items. I'm pretty excited about that too."

LOOKING FORWARD

Being in launch mode right now, Wicked is trying to import data as quickly as possible. Says Kolko, "I think Centric is going to be a huge tool in terms of us being able to find resources for ingredient sourcing, and supplier capability sourcing which is really important for us to understand. And even if we don't use a specific supplier right now, our VP of operations for North America is going to start going to different factories and checking out what their capabilities are. We can house all that information in Centric and understand who we want to use after we look at all those factories' production lines. I think it's definitely going to be a huge win in terms of understanding where we're going to get our margin targets, and how we're going to do that."

Of the overall experience thus far, Kolko enthuses, "I'm super happy with what we've done and our partnership with Centric. It's been a really nice experience. Everyone's been great—I am really pleased with where we are. I definitely don't feel like I was just dumped off after implementation and left to fend for myself. The Centric team has been with me all the way."

RESULTS

- + Workflows are more efficient
- + Teams have access to all product data in central, digital hub
- + Able to track thousands of supplier documents
- + Manage plants and their capabilities





ABOUT WICKED KITCHEN (www.wickedkitchen.com/us/)

We're Derek and Chad Sarno—brothers, plant-based chefs and the creators of Wicked Kitchen. Wicked Kitchen is a mission-led leading plant-based food company that creates restaurant-quality foods emphasizing flavor & texture that make it easy and interesting to adopt more plants in our diet.

We cut through the bullsh*t of crowded and stale grocery shelves like a hot knife through tofu with one goal: to bring plants mainstream! We're driven by innovation and high culinary standards, crafting pioneering and 'first to market' foods with an emphasis on OMG this is delicious AF.

Whether you're vegan or not, our exclusive 'wicked' food range unleashes the mighty flavour of plants like never before. There is no downside to eating and cooking more plants! The more you do it the better and easier it gets. It's always been about working towards doing good and being of benefit for the planet, people and animals!

If you would like to know more about Wicked Kitchen or how to go about adopting more plant-based products for your lifestyle, please check us out at wickedkitchen.com/ or [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Facebook](#).

ABOUT CENTRIC SOFTWARE (www.centricsoftware.com)

From its headquarters in Silicon Valley, Centric Software® provides a Product Concept to Consumer Digital Transformation Platform for retail, consumer goods, fashion, food and beverage as well as cosmetics and personal care companies. Centric's flagship Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) platform, Centric PLM, delivers enterprise-class merchandise planning, product development, specification and formulation, package and labeling, sourcing, quality, compliance, traceability and assortment management functionality tailored for fast-moving consumer industries. Centric's innovations are 100% market-driven with the highest user adoption rate in the industry. Centric pioneered mobility for product development, introducing the first mobile apps for PLM enabling teams to collaborate on the move. Centric was also first to launch innovative Adobe® Illustrator Connect and 3D CAD connectors, empowering design and product development teams to work in familiar 2D and 3D software environments while directly connected to PLM. Centric's Agile DeploymentSM methodology speeds implementation for the industry's fastest time to value. All Centric innovations shorten time to market, boost product innovation and reduce costs.

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