



## Canadian Food for the Hungry International

www.cfhi.ca



### At A Glance:

- **Company:** Canadian Food for the Hungry International
- **Location:** British Columbia, Canada
- **Industry:** Non-profit
- **Challenges:**
  - To get donations in and supplies out to the needy quickly and efficiently — a process that had been hindered due to an inefficient patchwork of disparate software applications.
- **Software switched from:** Goldmine, MS Great Plains, proprietary inventory management system
- **Other software considered:** ACCPAC Online
- **Results with NetSuite:**
  - Online donations have increased by almost 300 percent since using NetSuite
  - Reports that used to take 1 week to compile now take 1 minute
  - Working with NetSuite's philanthropic arm, NetSuite Giving, to design and leverage world-class marketing strategies and processes

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— Mark Petzold, IT Manager

Canadian Food for the Hungry International

### The Results:

Doing good may be a noble goal — but it's rarely an easy one. Since Canadian Food for the Hungry International (CFHI) switched from a patchwork of disparate, and sub-optimal, software packages to the integrated full features of NetSuite, it has seen a marked increase in efficiency — and donations.

In fact, since CFHI launched on NetSuite, online donations have gone up by almost 300 percent, according to Mark Petzold, the non-profit's IT manager. "For one thing, NetSuite has let us design a much more respectable Web site," he says. "But it is also remarkably flexible. We can put up links to take donations almost immediately after a natural disaster, where in the past we'd need a week and have to go through a partner. After the 2008 earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar we were taking — and getting — donations the very next day. That lets us get help to those who needed it fast and effectively."

Just like a traditional business, non-profits like CFHI need to keep efficient, accurate, and timely tabs on their operations. In the past, as CFHI struggled to extract information from CRM, accounting, and inventory management packages that didn't speak to each other, that was a problem. With NetSuite, it's just standard operating procedure. "We've almost started to take for granted the built-in efficiency of NetSuite," says Petzold. "Reports that used to have to be requested and take a week to complete are now done in a minute, on demand. It's amazing how many times I talk to people who are just floored by how quickly they can get things done now — and how quickly we can do our part to make the world a little better."

### The Challenges:

Since its founding over 20 years ago, Canadian Food for the Hungry International (CFHI) has constantly been expanding its role — and the good work it does. From the beginning, CFHI has sent emergency relief supplies — food, water, bedding, medical supplies and other essentials — to disaster-struck and impoverished areas around the world. Indeed, it raised money and sent assistance to communities imperiled by the 2008 earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar. But today CFHI is also a leader in sustainable development, working with, and teaching, communities to build the skills and resources they need to thrive. And like any growing organization, CFHI found that as its workload increases, so too does its need to operate efficiently.

One normally doesn't think of a nonprofit as a place where speed is of the essence, marketing and customer relationships are crucial, and the technology to make it all happen must be cutting edge. But at CFHI, that's exactly the case. Communities in distress need

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IT Manager

Canadian Food for the Hungry

International

help fast — and that means donations need to stream in quickly, supply inventories need to be carefully tracked and managed, and donors must be treated like customers, able to see results, get answers, and occasionally be reminded that there’s even more ways they can help. In other words, like any successful business, a non-profit benefits from the latest in CRM, inventory management, reporting, marketing, and accounting software.

Unfortunately, up until a few years ago, CFHI wasn’t seeing the efficiencies it wanted, because its software platform wasn’t up to the task. The organization was using a patchwork of programs that didn’t work well with each other — Goldmine, Microsoft Great Plains, Outlook, a proprietary inventory management system, another system to run its website. “We were focusing too much time getting disparate systems to talk to each other rather than focusing on our core work,” says Petzold.

Then in 2005, CFHI discovered NetSuite. “It was one of the few products that covered all of our needs — from accounting and inventory management to CRM and e-commerce,” says Petzold. “And it was all integrated and Web-based, which is important since we have multiple locations, including a main office and a warehouse where medical supplies were refurbished and shipped.”

### The Solution:

The most immediate benefit of NetSuite, CFHI found, was its ability to compress time. Donations could come in faster following a natural disaster — and thereby get where they needed to faster — because the links on CFHI’s website could be created almost instantaneously in NetSuite, a big improvement over the organization’s previous system, which usually required a week — and outside help — to do the same thing. “NetSuite not only lets us do it quickly, but is simple enough that we can do it ourselves, which gives us control, flexibility, and most importantly, speed,” says Petzold. And because all NetSuite functions were integrated, incoming donations would immediately be noted in the accounting system — no more re-keying of data from one package to another. And no more data entry mistakes and time-consuming manual processes.

Moreover, NetSuite’s Web-based architecture meant that CFHI staff could work from any location. “Being able to access our system via the Web is a great thing,” says Petzold. “People now work from home; they can log in from all across the country. It greatly enhances our productivity.”

Reports, too, are enhanced, generated on the fly, whenever needed. No longer do they have to be requested a week in advance to give staff time to pull the required data from different systems and manually build the report. “NetSuite’s dashboard goes even a step further,” says Petzold, “giving us live data right on our screen, so we can click and see how many kids we’re sponsoring, how many new donors and donations are come in — and quickly see how these numbers compare to how we did in the past. NetSuite gives us instant insight on how we are doing — and where we need to focus so we can do better.”

By using NetSuite, CFHI’s call center can access a complete, up-to-date record when a donor calls in, letting them see the caller’s history, and enabling them to provide more personalized service. That creates a sense of professionalism that can impress — and retain — repeat donors.

But NetSuite provided CFHI with more than a technology platform. Through its philanthropic arm, NetSuite Giving, NetSuite aims to help organizations that do good, do it better. Volunteers from NetSuite, contributing their time and expertise at no cost, are now helping CFHI take the software to the next level. “They’re helping us learn the ropes of online marketing, including banner ads and pay-per-click programs,” says Petzold. “That’s something we’ve never done, but has the potential to bring in more donations — and to let us do even more for communities in need.”

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