

IFS 10: Chief Industries & the early adopter program



Chief Industries, Inc. was founded in 1954 as a construction company in Grand Island, Nebraska. Today it has eight locations in the US, one in the UK and another in France. It offers a range of storage and material handling products for agricultural use that includes catwalks, tower systems and aeration systems. Chief also manufactures modular homes and designs and manufactures metal buildings used for industrial, agriculture, retail, government and public buildings, such as schools and churches.

In addition to manufacturing, Chief also produces renewable fuels, offers steel fabrication and powder coating services and has a contract carrier that includes logistics services for pickup, delivery, tracking and scheduling.

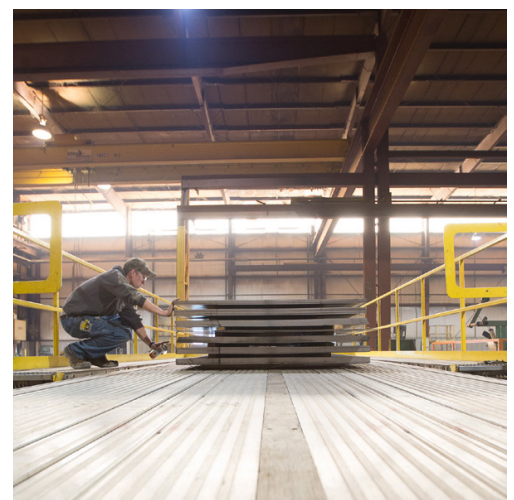
IFS: a decade of development

Chief Industries has been using IFS for the past 10 years to help it maintain high levels of customer service in a dynamic marketplace. A key benefit of using IFS is the level of flexibility it provides in terms of making modifications to fit business processes. Unforeseen modifications are often required in reaction to fresh customer demands or as a result of bringing a new division or acquisition in line with the rest of the company.

About Chief Industries

From their humble beginning as a small construction company that worked out of a garage in Nebraska, USA, Chief Industries has grown to include divisions and subsidiaries representing a diverse array of interests. These include construction and development, agriculture, ethanol, trucking, metal fabrication, housing and electrical. With operations located in Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Aurora, Lexington and Lincoln, Nebraska, Fort Dodge, Iowa, Rensselaer, Indiana, Maldon, Essex, England, and Rousies, France, Chief has a skilled workforce of approximately 1,250.

www.chiefind.com



Furthermore, using IFS has enabled Chief to move all of its data into one place, resulting in users having clearer, faster access to business-critical data. “We had a drastic lag time in information flow,” notes Mike Henderson, Operations Manager, Chief Industries Agricultural Division. “Once IFS was implemented, it basically went to a real-time system. We were able to take, on average, a week to a week and a half off of the standard lead times for our products.”

Being an early adopter: the benefits for Chief Industries

One of the key benefits of taking part in the IFS 10 Early Adopter Program (EAP) for Chief Industries has been the ability to shape the end product. “We believe that we have great business analysts on our team who understand what needs to happen at the business, so when we looked at the beta, we picked out things that we thought could be done better and we’ve had about 35 enhancements requests approved by IFS. That’s a great deal for us and a great deal for other businesses that are going to be using IFS 10 in the future,” says Jay Gnuse, Information Technology Director, Chief Industries.

Chief embarked on the EAP in August 2017 and went live over Thanksgiving weekend at the end of November. This was a significant improvement compared to the six months the firm took to implement IFS 8. This was the second time Chief participated in the EAP and the organization’s past experience played a role in reducing the implementation time.

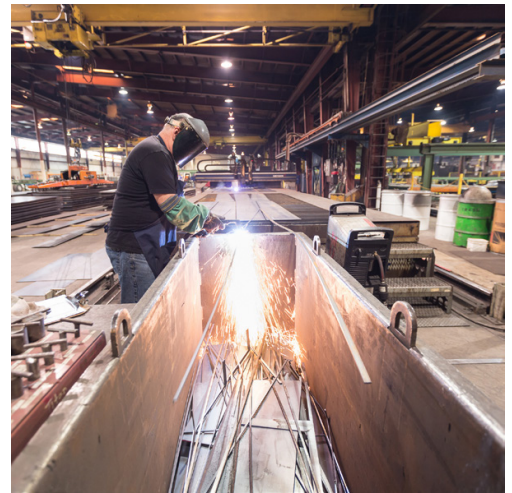
“With any beta program there will be risks, but we have a lot of confidence in IFS and that allowed us to proceed without concern. This is now our second early adopter program and we would certainly like to do another one in the future,” says Gnuse, adding: “The people in R&D at IFS definitely understand the product and they were able to help us understand how and why they did things and we’ll be able to utilize the system better thanks to their knowledge.”

Another clear benefit of taking part in the EAP has been the opportunity to learn and understand the system. Employees spending a concerted amount of time exploring the product suite, actively trying to find issues that might need to be corrected and thinking about ways in which the solution can be improved develops a deeper understanding of what is possible to achieve and realistic to expect.

“We really enjoyed working with IFS over the years, they respond very quickly and appropriately and they help us through things – with this beta, for example, we’ve received probably 75 training sessions, so that’s been a great big help,” notes Gnuse. “We’re utilizing some of the areas in IFS more now than what we were previously because we’ve learned new things about those areas as well.”

Benefits

- Highly flexible solution that is easily modified
- Opportunity to shape the end product
- Training opportunities result in greater understanding



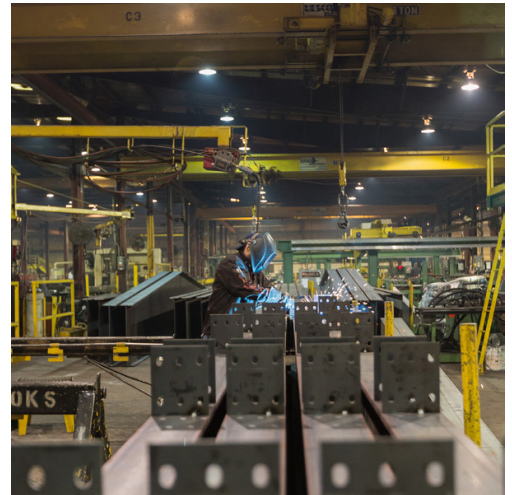
One of the reasons we selected IFS was because we thought we could influence the product, and we've certainly seen that over the years. We have created a great partnership between Chief Industries and ifs and we feel we have a stronger and better product because of it.

Jay Gnuse, Information Technology Director,
Chief Industries

What next?

Chief Industries has been using IFS for the past 10 years, but there is still plenty of scope for the company to take advantage of the software platform's functionality. In addition to using IFS Lobby, Chief is also considering taking advantage of IFS Mobile.

"IFS is vital to our organization and it allows us to provide that better customer service that we continue to strive for. We're looking into an array of different modules including group consolidation and estimation. We're excited to see what IFS is going to offer in future updates. We're excited to continue this relationship with IFS and we're looking forward to seeing what's next," adds Gnuse.



Find out more

Further information, e-mail info@ifs.com, contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, ifs.com

