



AKBAR BROTHERS INCREASES EFFICIENCIES IN DOING BUSINESS AND MORE WITH IFS APPLICATIONS™

The world's leading exporter of tea from Sri Lanka, Akbar Brothers has enjoyed improved productivity, increased employee satisfaction and rapid customer-order fulfilments since first implementing IFS Applications in 2010. Today, the company benefits from a single enterprise system across its diverse operations, enabling it to deliver on its customer service promises by its focus on anticipating customer needs.

As tea merchants owning a unique family tradition stretching back over 100 years, Akbar Brothers have earned international recognition and awards for the quality of their products and their know-how of tea, all testament to how they run their business and their dedicated, experienced and qualified employees.

ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE THAT WOULD ENABLE CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

Akbar Brothers' status as Sri Lanka's biggest tea exporter—a position the company has held continuously since 1992—is reflected in the fact that, every day, some 70 million cups of fine Ceylon tea shipped by Akbar Brothers are consumed around the world. However, resting on laurels isn't a characteristic that marks out this company.

“As a business that makes new products and that is continually innovating, we need a fast, efficient method of bringing a new product to the market,” says Huzefa Akbarally, a company director and Akbar Brothers family member. “We have to continually change and continually improve in order to be competitive.”

Such an expression of business ability clearly marks out this company, suggesting little surprise about its sustained position over two decades at the top of the leaderboard of tea exporters in Sri Lanka. “We are the largest exporter,” Akbarally states proudly. “All our factories are based in Sri Lanka. We pack all our tea in the greater Colombo region. We have three main facilities, and running those we have close to 1,000 employees. We export about 2.5 billion cups of tea per year—about three times as many as our nearest competitor.”

Akbar possesses some of the world's largest and most modern facilities for the packaging of teas and utilizes state-of-the-art machinery from Germany, Italy and Japan for its automated tea cleaning, tea blending, tea flavoring and tea packing processes. Each of these facilities hosts its own tea tasting laboratory to ensure that the quality of tea is maintained at every stage. Both the tea bagging and tea packing facilities are ISO 9002 and HACCP certified.

ABOUT AKBAR BROTHERS

Akbar Brothers is a family-owned business established in 1972, with a workforce of over 2,500 employees. The company has marked over 20 years as Sri Lanka's largest tea exporter, with 2013 shipments topping 50 million kilos worth over LKR 32 billion (approx. US\$ 239 million). Akbar Brothers was the first Sri Lankan tea company to be awarded the internationally recognized ISO 9002 and HACCP quality certificates. Prior to that, the prestigious 'Lion' logo endorsement of Sri Lanka Tea Board for Pure Ceylon Tea was awarded to the company.

www.akbar.com



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IFS APPLICATIONS—THE ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE BACKBONE

Behind the scenes of Akbar Brothers' success is IFS Applications, a robust enterprise software backbone that supports its key and critical business processes, and gives the company improved productivity, increased employee satisfaction and rapid customer-order fulfilments.

IFS Applications offers both process and discrete manufacturing capabilities in a flexible, integrated package with world-class quality management and traceability from the raw material supply chain through to the finished product shipped to customers. This single version of the truth contains the data necessary for streamlined compliance with HAACP, FDA, USDA, REACH and other regulations affecting process manufacturers.

"We started working with IFS in 2010," Akbarally says. "When we decided to look for an ERP system, we had five or six separate systems running, all having the same information fed in different formats, and which didn't support some of our business requirements."

Akbarally says the IFS implementation offered improved coordination across functional departments, increased efficiencies in doing business, and better accessibility to data so that management has real-time access to information for decision-making and managerial control purposes.

LOCAL PRESENCE A SELECTION FACTOR

Akbarally points out another factor why his company chose IFS Applications: "Because IFS has a strong presence in Sri Lanka," he says. "This gave us confidence in their team strength and capability in implementing a solution in Sri Lanka. The confidence we felt with IFS made it a clear choice above its competitors." He adds, "IFS always delivers."

Akbarally speaks of IFS's business intelligence capability—"now we have everything in one database"—making it easier to analyze profit. "Spending less time on menial work is helping us concentrate on the customer, and that is what counts," he notes. He says that Akbar Brothers are running three standard modules—financials, distribution, and manufacturing. "We also run customized modules for tea auction and tea blending, which are made specifically for us. I have more time to find the details, so my accuracy level is higher."

Deputy Production Manager Aruna da Silva uses the IFS system daily. "It saves me one day per week," he says. "I am very happy to use IFS Applications. It is an amazing tool!"

Anuradha Rathnayaka, a costing executive in the Customs Department, says the IFS system makes her work easier than before. "It saves me a lot of time and helps me to do my job better," she says. "And now I am stress free!"

For Akbarally, addressing business challenges is a major focus of his role. "IFS was always accommodating; they went that extra mile to find the correct solution for us to make it work," he says. "I'm sure as time goes on, there will be even more challenges that we face, and we will have to continually evolve with that. And I hope that IFS will be a part of that journey."

BENEFITS

- Improved productivity, increased employee satisfaction and rapid customer-order fulfilments
- Single version of the truth contains the data necessary for streamlined compliance with HAACP and other regulations affecting process manufacturers



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