



# Batch Control/ERP Software Ensures Manufacturer's FDA Compliance & MORE



## CUSTOMER PROFILE

# BACCOFF

In 1992, Russell Ralston created a 100% nicotine- and tobacco-free moist snuff alternative to help him quit dipping tobacco. Dipstop, his family-owned company, makes BaccOff in Selma, Alabama, using all-natural, FDA-approved ingredients like black tea, peppermint leaf and coffee.

- ✓ 200+ ingredients & materials
- ✓ 143 SKUs
- ✓ Less than 25 employees
- ✓ Available online (Amazon, BaccOff, Dipstop), at retail (140)

## CHALLENGES

- Comply with increasingly stringent FDA regulations
- Subject to random audits
- Transition from manual, one-person data handling

## SOLUTION

Mar-Kov Batch Control & Inventory Management Software

## RESULTS

- ✓ FDA compliant, audit-ready
- ✓ Ability to manage 5X growth in a short amount of time
- ✓ Increased margins
- ✓ Optimized product mix
- ✓ Systemic, digital platform replaces ad-hoc manual data administration

**FDA COMPLIANCE WAS THE CRITICAL DELIVERABLE WITH DIPSTOP'S NEW MRP, MES AND ERP PLATFORM** – the increased margins, optimized product mix and ability to more easily manage growth were an added bonus!

*"FDA compliance is mandatory with all food products, so we transitioned to a batch control and inventory management software when the FDA demanded greater trackability and traceability,"* says Kellie Robertson, administrative data operations manager, Dipstop, which is subject to annual third-party and random FDA audits.



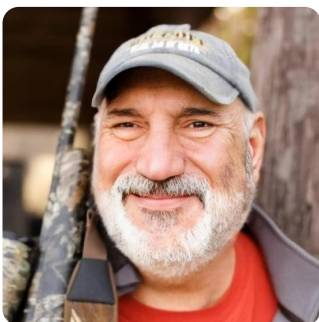
**Kellie Robertson**  
Administrative data  
operations manager,  
Dipstop

*"Our ad hoc pen and paper approach couldn't give us the control we needed for compliance."*

Since 2014, Dipstop has relied on Mar-Kov for the precise, current traceability/recall, daily pre-op and post-op procedures, and preventative maintenance required by HACCP and the FDA. Dipstop has been audited by the FDA within the last year, and constant audit-readiness is essential because the FDA doesn't have to give advance notice.

While FDA compliance was the main driver, over time, founder and owner Russell Ralson and his managers discovered Mar-Kov could do much more for Dipstop. As the business grew, Dipstop's managers came to appreciate and rely on Mar-Kov's centralized digital database, planning, and reporting capabilities (standard, custom).

*"Mar-Kov has become integral to nearly all of Dipstop's operations and has allowed us to easily scale our manufacturing processes and inventory management with confidence in our compliance and efficiency,"* says Russell.



**Russell Ralson**  
Founder and owner,  
Dipstop

## PROFITABLE GROWTH WITH ACCESSIBLE DATA & INSIGHTS

As the company grew, quintupling in size since 2014, Russell and his managers also realized just how much they needed Mar-Kov to support that rapid growth. As production ramped up to accommodate greater demand from wholesale and retail customers as well as online sales, the

complexity and volume of data also increased.

*"Mar-Kov provides critical business insights and gives us the control we need with our rapid growth,"* says Russell, who used to manage all the paper-based data himself.

*"It was a whole lot for one person to remember and keep track of,"* adds Kellie.

Senior leaders regularly use the sales analysis tool to assess overall growth as well as each SKU's performance (sales, margins). They may discontinue a SKU, promote specific SKUs to boost website sales (BaccOff, Amazon) and even increase prices. Dipstop employees can review their reports monthly and easily customize the time frames.

*"We use Mar-Kov's reports to make better decisions for Dipstop and filter the data as we see fit,"* says Kellie.



## INVENTORY MANAGEMENT FOR ON-TIME DELIVERY

Dipstop guarantees orders will be shipped the next business day, but usually ships the same day. To make that happen, Kellie uses the Plan Tracing Set Viewer to confirm she has the necessary raw materials. If she's short, Mar-Kov highlights the ingredients to help her prioritize and minimize or avoid expedited shipping charges. Mar-Kov will tell her that just one of the 10 bags of sugar stacked in the warehouse is available to her because 9 have been committed to pre-existing orders. Mar-Kov also ensures materials are used in order of First In, First Out (FIFO) and won't let employees scan SKUs with newer lot numbers.

*"Mar-Kov helps us save money and ship on time, because we have the information we need to purchase and plan more effectively,"* says Kellie.



## COMPLIANCE, QUALITY, CONSISTENCY

Russell takes Dipstop's commitment to nicotine-free dip and a consistently superior taste personally! His grandmother gave him his first plug when he was 8 and by the age of 18, he was hooked. After getting married and having kids, he tried to quit dipping cold turkey – it didn't work. To keep dipping and break his nicotine addiction, Russell created Dipstop and his BaccOff moist snuff.

Because Dipstop makes a product the FDA considers a food, Russell uses Mar-Kov to make sure Dipstop is compliant and employees adhere to the recipes.

*"Because of Mar-Kov, every batch tastes exactly the same,"* adds Kellie.

Mar-Kov also has employees proceed step-by-step to avoid do-overs. If employees skip Dipstop's Critical Control Point (CCP), aka the kill step, that batch is compromised. Raw materials must be heated to a temperature that kills microorganisms.

*"It's critical – if that CCP is missed or compromised, we have to start all over again – it's expensive and can delay shipments,"* says Kellie.

## QUICKBOOKS INTEGRATION FOR FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Dipstop's ability to help consumers get healthy depends on its own financial health. To that end, Quickbooks integration was a must-have for Dipstop. Mar-Kov has automated the data entry of hundreds of orders that used to be entered manually – every day! With Mar-Kov, Dipstop now has access to accurate Cost of Goods sold, inventory amounts and their QuickBooks is up-to-date.

*"Exporting all of that data is seamless since we moved to the cloud at Mar-Kov's recommendation,"* says Kellie. *"That data often bogged down our QuickBooks desktop so we consolidated hundreds of daily invoices for our Weborder Customer into 1 daily invoice."*

## TIME SAVINGS, FEWER HUMAN ERRORS

Notably, Mar-Kov made it possible for Dipstop to manage its rapidly increasing sales by optimizing staff duties. Mar-Kov reduced the need for manual data and activity documentation, which allowed the small team to work efficiently during a period of intense growth. Mar-Kov also significantly reduced the potential for human error, which can lead to manufacturing, shipping and billing glitches.

*"Eliminating human errors is a significant timesaving in its own right,"* says Russell.

Today, 80% of Dipstop employees use Mar-Kov because the platform makes their management, food safety, batching, floor supervisor, shipping and maintenance jobs so much easier and more accurate. Employees aren't running around looking for raw materials or reading through countless sticky notes for critical information.

*"Once you learn Mar-Kov, you don't have to remember anything because Mar-Kov does it for you,"* says Kellie.

New employees may find Mar-Kov intimidating when they first see it. That's why Kellie and her colleagues make sure new employees know what Mar-Kov can do for them.

*"The more I talk about the benefits of Mar-Kov, the more they're open to experiencing those benefits for themselves, which means they're ready to give it a try,"* says Kellie.

