

Success Story

Power & Rubber Supply Inc.



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Daniel Delannoy, Information Technology Specialist
Power & Rubber Supply Inc.

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Streamline information, introduce efficiencies and create a virtually paperless environment for an Alabama distribution, service, and engineering company

Benefits

- Reduced time spent picking orders by one hour per day, accelerated deliveries, and reduced human packing errors
- Helped adjust pricing for products that were previously being sold at a loss
- Virtually eliminated paper from the process

Company Facts

- Location: Tuscaloosa, Alabama
- Industry: Fluid power
- Number of Employees: 55
- Website: www.powerandrubber.com



Founded in 1976, Power & Rubber Supply Inc. (PRS) is a leading provider of bearing, power transmission, and rubber products to industries based throughout Alabama and the surrounding region. In addition to stocking nearly 14,000 separate items totalling millions of dollars, the company offers custom engineering and preventive maintenance services ranging from hydraulic hose assembly and conveyor drive design work, to conveyor belting and vulcanizing.

“This is a very competitive industry,” says Daniel Delannoy, PRS Information Technology Specialist for the past four years. “There are larger supply firms in this marketplace. However, few match our level of service or engineering expertise, which is especially important to customers that constantly reach out to us with immediate demands. That’s why we pride ourselves on next-day delivery for most requests and maintaining a fully stocked inventory that meets their needs on a daily basis.”

According to Delannoy, for more than a decade, these priorities were met with the use of an “antiquated” software system that performed basic tasks such as the creation of invoices fairly well, but had difficulty compiling data and then creating comprehensive reports. Utilizing tab-through screens and a dot matrix printer, the company’s sales, accounting, and warehouse professionals were constantly forced to “jerry-rig” historical documents based on the research of paper records and the limited amount of information stored on the computer.

“There was no way to simply, cleanly, and quickly collate details,” offers Delannoy. “Everything was done manually, at a cost of hundreds of man hours every year. For instance, our accountant had to work through layers of Microsoft® Excel® spreadsheets to prepare taxes. We had difficulty with little things like gathering sales information so we could receive manufacturer rebates once we sold the designated amount of specific products. Inventories were determined almost entirely through in-person, on-site inspections.”

Implementation and Training

Committed to upgrading the company’s full computer infrastructure, Delannoy reached out to Epicor® (then Activant Solutions Inc.) in 2009 to learn more about the Prophet 21 enterprise software solution. Based on his positive experiences with the system at other companies, Delannoy became convinced that the real-time information gathering, inventory control, billing, and warehouse management capabilities of Prophet 21 were what PRS needed.

EPICOR®

Prophet 21 went online at PRS in 2010 after a 10-month implementation period that included a combination of weekly training calls and 3- to 5-day onsite learning sessions with Epicor consultants. Throughout this time, PRS personnel representing departments ranging from accounting to inventory met with Epicor team members at PRS to ask questions and learn about the Prophet 21 features that would eventually help each group save time and enhance productivity.

“Epicor representatives were extremely helpful throughout the entire process,” explains Delannoy. “In addition to helping our employees understand all the system’s features, they worked with us to better organize our own infrastructure. As a result, nearly everything we do takes less time. For example, with Prophet 21, orders and bills are processed much more quickly.”

Picks, Packs, Tracking, and Inventory Control

“Streamlined” is a word that Delannoy often employs to describe Prophet 21 benefits. Using features that are “logically laid out” and “easy to find” in Microsoft Windows®, PRS warehouse workers spend approximately one less hour per day picking orders. Prior to the system’s installation, salespeople physically worked with warehouse staff to select the proper products for packing and shipping. Now, print tickets are automatically generated for new sales and directly distributed to the appropriate individual, complete with shelf locations—a benefit that has not only greatly accelerated deliveries, but also reduced human packing errors.

Another key component is the ability to track inventory costs and profit margins by readily reviewing the exact price paid for each item and the amount billed to customers. In some cases, Prophet 21 even helped PRS adjust the pricing for products that were previously being sold at a loss (after various customer discounts and rebates were factored into the equation).

Inventory control is another area that has become far more sophisticated since the installation of Prophet 21. With the system, PRS now knows the exact number of items on a shelf and their histories, so sales patterns can be reviewed over any given time period.

“Our overall inventory and warehousing capabilities are just more attuned to the marketplace now,” says Matthew Oliver, PRS Shipping, Receiving & Warehouse Manager. “Everything we do is much more realistic. Before, we never had the ability to truly anticipate the demand for various products based on historical analyses. Today, our inventory is much cleaner, since we have a far greater understanding of product sales cycles and seasonal demands.

“Plus, we’ve virtually eliminated paper from the process, which has allowed us to correct errors instantaneously, combine separate orders for one client into one purchase order, and reduce the hours we used to spend tracking paper files whenever a question arose.”

Continuing to Uncover Value

As for the future, Delannoy believes PRS is still learning the true value of Prophet 21. “Most people dislike change, especially when they’re so used to doing things a certain way for years,” he adds. “We encountered some initial resistance from our staff during the installation two years ago. However, their attitude quickly turned around when they found out about all the extras that Prophet 21 offered. Information is easier to find. Reports compile quickly. And it seems each week we’re finding another feature that we didn’t know existed, but provides a better, simpler way to do things.”

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and services industries. With nearly 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit www.epicor.com.



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