



Epicor Success Story

Miller Hardware Company

Gains margin and reduces costs with Epicor Professional Services

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Valdosta, Georgia
- ▶ Industry: Hardware, and Home Centers
- ▶ Number of Locations: 3
- ▶ Number of Employees: 70
- ▶ Web site: www.millerhardware.com
- ▶ Affiliation: Ace

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Benefiting from technology investment
- ▶ Managing three diverse businesses
- ▶ Improving inventory management
- ▶ Applying consistent processes throughout the company

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Eagle®
- ▶ Epicor Professional Services Consulting

Benefits

- ▶ Increased GMROI by 2 percent
- ▶ Gained gross margin through improved pricing
- ▶ Eliminated two staff positions because of increased efficiencies
- ▶ Improved performance monitoring by using reports and customer data



Miller Hardware Company has been serving the people and communities of South Georgia and North Florida since 1908. With over 64,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space, the company has evolved into one of the largest independent hardware businesses in South Georgia. Today, the fourth-generation family business operates three very diverse operations in three locations. Miller Hardware Company is the commercial business, Whitehead Industrial Hardware is the industrial supply business and Miller Hardware North and Seasons Garden Center is the retail store.

For more than 25 years, Miller Hardware Company has used the Epicor Eagle business management solution and in the mid-2000s realized the need for additional help. "We discovered that we were quite capable of buying technology, but not so good at implementing or using it," said Dutton Miller, owner of Miller Hardware Company. "It was time to enlist the help of Epicor Professional Services. In the decade we've been working with our consultant, she's helped us improve many areas of our business, including running our three locations on one Epicor Eagle system."

Technology combined with solid business processes delivers results

Retail businesses turn to Epicor because they need software to run their companies and naturally want a high return from their investment. "I always thought that staying current meant using technology, said Dutton Miller.

"We had the right technology with our Eagle system, but we weren't fully using it because we didn't have the right business processes in place. Our technology outpaced our knowledge. Epicor consultants know the Eagle system and have vast experience in retail business operations. It was our consultant's expert guidance that made us realize we had to get our processes straight before we would realize the full power of our computer system. Our Epicor consultant followed an order, so she could see the workflow from beginning to end. Without this understanding of process flow we wouldn't have gotten anywhere. Purchasing Manager Richard Miller added, "Her help brought clarity to what goes into processing a PO, made us aware of the tools at our disposal, and how to streamline the purchasing process and use the Eagle system to save time and labor. We have eliminated two purchasing staff positions."

Better using the Eagle system to gain results

By combining improved processes with better Eagle system use, gains were realized across the business. "We've had success in multiple areas," said Dutton Miller. "Since fully embracing a new inventory methodology, we're consistently in stock on A and B items and methodically eliminating D and X items. We have the right items in stock and our turns have improved. The back office accounting is another area of significant progress. We've eliminated one to two back office staff positions by having a much more efficient workflow – less paper handling and less filing. Information is available in the Eagle system to everyone whenever they need it, so the accounting staff has fewer

interruptions. For instance, anyone on our team can check on an accounts receivable balance and be able to be a part of the collection process."

"Now we understand the available Eagle reports and how to use information differently," said Dutton Miller. "Instead of our old habit of looking at every single transaction, we now look for exceptions – the transactions outside of the range of acceptability. Today, we can spot a gross margin that's too low or catch a mistake before it becomes too costly."

"Our Epicor consultant helped us understand which parts of our business are profitable, which parts of our business aren't so profitable and what we need to do to improve," said Dutton Miller. "Gross Margin Return on Investment (GMROI) increased by several points since using the consultant. Our margins have increased because it is much easier for us to recognize when an item's margin is too low and to increase it in real time by using Eagle pricing tools."

Staying competitive with expert help

A key component of staying competitive today is using technology to improve customer experience. "The thing about technology is if you don't stay up-to-date, you get left behind. We would have been left behind if it hadn't been for Epicor Professional Services," said Dutton Miller. "The discipline of having an Epicor Professional Services consultant come in and keep our focus on making improvements has really been beneficial to us."

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software that is designed around the needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 40 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements is built into every solution—in the cloud, hosted, or on premises. With a deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions spur growth while managing complexity. The result is powerful solutions that free your resources so you can grow your business. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.



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