



## Epicor Success Story

# Stellar Industrial Supply

## Northwest distributor partners with Epicor to increase accuracy and efficiency

### Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Tacoma, Washington
- ▶ Industry: Industrial
- ▶ Number of Stores: 9
- ▶ Web site: [www.stellarindustrial.com](http://www.stellarindustrial.com)



### Success Highlights

#### Challenges

- ▶ Help a Tacoma, Washington-based industrial and safety supply distributor increase efficiency and create a strategic advantage through technology

#### Solution

- ▶ Epicor Prophet 21

#### Benefits

- ▶ Improved warehouse management capabilities
- ▶ Increased inventory accuracy, leading to fewer errors and better customer service
- ▶ Shortened learning curve

Stellar Industrial Supply Inc. is an industrial, safety, cutting tools, and marine supply distributor headquartered in Tacoma, Washington. The company boasts nine branches, and has grown to \$50 million in annual revenues over the past two decades.

Supplementing this growth over the years has been the company's relationship with Epicor, which reaches back to Stellar's earliest days, when they ran a proprietary hardware/software business system before switching to Epicor Acclaim and then Epicor Prophet 21 in 2003.

"We've always tried to build our company for the future," says Stellar President John Wiborg. "So while it would have been easier to just stay with Acclaim, we knew that Prophet 21 had a more favorable architecture that made it better suited for evolution and development. We invested in the solution as much for what it could do at the time, as for what it would be able to do down the road."

#### Uncommon Versatility

"Knowing that technology would be crucial to the development of our business, we made a decision a long time ago to have a really capable technology partner," explains Wiborg. "We always wanted to be ahead of the pack."



The integration of Prophet 21 with the Epicor Internet trading network, Trading Partner Connect, and Stellar's B2B Seller Web-based storefront gives the company a versatility few competitors can claim. "People are always asking how much business we do through our Web site," says Wiborg. "I tell them that's not the point—the point is the level of service we offer our customers."

If Stellar's customers want to view invoices or look at their buying history, they can do that through the company's B2B Seller site, and the benefits are threefold. In addition to providing customers the convenience of accessing information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Stellar saves on overhead, since customers can help themselves, and the site serves to differentiate them from competitors without similar offerings.

## Efficiency with Wireless Warehouse

Looking to gain speed, efficiency, and simplicity in the warehouse, Stellar Industrial also implemented Epicor Wireless Warehouse Management Solution (WWMS). A wireless solution that integrates seamlessly with the Epicor Prophet 21 system, WWMS streamlines warehouse processes, increases control over warehouse tasks, and improves customer service.

John Hibbard, vice president of operations at Stellar, recalls the transparency of going live on WWMS: "We shut down our old system on Friday and started the WWMS on Monday, and not one customer of ours knew we had implemented a new system—it was an easy transition."

Besides being easy to implement, the Wireless Warehouse Management Solution boasts a short learning curve. "One of our customer service representatives expressed interest in moving to the warehouse," says Hibbard. "We had her in there right after go-live and she picked up WWMS in a day."

## An Increase in Accuracy

When asked what aspect of Stellar's business WWMS has affected the most, Wiborg answers without hesitation: "Inventory accuracy." Hibbard concurs: "Gaining accuracy in the warehouse means better service for our customers. Since we scan every item we pick, the likelihood of us shipping the wrong products is reduced, which amounts to less returned merchandise."

With this newfound efficiency and accuracy in the warehouse, Stellar achieved their best full inventory in the company's history. "We've always had a 1-2 percent discrepancy figure, and when you have \$5 million in inventory, that can be a fairly large number," remarks Hibbard. "With WWMS, we've been able to reduce the adjustment, and that is an immediate return on investment."

"When our customers come into our warehouse and they see our guys scanning items with a handheld device, they feel that they're dealing with a company that is forward-thinking in the technology field," Hibbard adds. "We get a lot of 'oohs' and 'aahs' when they go through our warehouse."

## Conclusion

"We continue to deploy all aspects of Prophet 21 and the products with which it interacts," says Wiborg. "Whether we're talking WWMS, B2B Seller or Trading Partner Connect—each one creates a different strategic advantage."

Reflecting on Stellar's relationship with Epicor, Wiborg is confident his company will maintain its position on the cutting edge. He concludes: "Epicor is a thought leader, and we'll continue to invest in their technology and take advantage of the tools they bring to the table."



## About Epicor

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