



Epicor Success Story

Atlas Hydraulics

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Brantford, Ontario, Canada
- ▶ Industry: Manufacturer of hydraulic hoses and tubing for agricultural, construction, and forestry equipment manufacturers
- ▶ Web site: www.atlashyd.com

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Enterprise resource planning (ERP) with extensive multiplant/multi-company capabilities
- ▶ Advanced electronic data interchange (EDI)
- ▶ Tight material requirements planning (MRP) control

Solution

- ▶ Epicor CMS

Benefits

- ▶ Comprehensive functionality out of the box, no modifications or customization
- ▶ Improvement in inventory accuracy, from 90 percent to 98.8 percent
- ▶ 100 percent on-time shipping
- ▶ Multiplant/multi-company capabilities enable central management of five plants and three distinct companies
- ▶ Critical to enabling opening of Mexican plant, enabling retention of largest customer's business
- ▶ Fully scalable as company sales double and expands to multiple new facilities



Centrally managing everything from production, purchasing and inventory to financials for five plants, organized into three distinct companies located in three countries presents some extraordinary challenges, for sure, but it's business-as-usual for Atlas Hydraulics.

The Brantford, Ontario-based company is a tier-one supplier of hydraulic hoses and tubing to an array of leading global agricultural, construction and forestry equipment manufacturers. From the Brantford headquarters, company managers monitor and direct all inter- and intra-plant processes and logistics pertaining to the manufacture of 40,000 parts and the purchase of 6,000 others, all to meet the delivery, quality and cost requirements of customers throughout Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Frank Beattie, Atlas' manager of IT and inventory, attributes much of the company's ability to manage such a complex multiplant/multi-company environment to Epicor CMS. Atlas established three new plants, one in western Canada, a second in Greenville, South Carolina and a third in Ramos, Mexico, after the Epicor CMS implementation, with the Greenville and the Mexican plants operating as distinct companies.

Epicor provides tools to help Atlas retain largest customer

"We're making component parts in Brantford and shipping huge volumes, over 50 percent of our sales, to Mexico and Greenville," says Beattie. "Everything is handled by Epicor CMS in the background, allowing us to plan and track each transaction, price everything accordingly and comply with all governmental requirements without creating invoices and related documentation. It takes a lot of planning to pull that off and Epicor CMS does it perfectly."

In fact, without Epicor CMS, Beattie's not sure Atlas could have retained a significant portion of its largest customer's business. One year, this customer moved a large manufacturing operation from Ontario to Ramos, Mexico. Forfeiting that business was not a viable option, but preserving it would require a heavy reliance on Epicor CMS multiplant/multi-company capabilities, as well as its range of integrated functionality, particularly MRP and EDI.

"The MRP functionality in Epicor CMS is tight, classic and dependable. We're able to schedule our processes in Brantford—the brazing, plating and bending—and plan our materials shipments to Mexico with confidence," says Beattie. "The integrated MRP and shop floor control functionality in Epicor CMS is critical to improving our planning and execution and allowed us to double our business without adding overhead." We can handle a one-week to two-week transportation time to Mexico because Epicor CMS has dramatically improved our inventory accuracy. We're retaining a lot of jobs in Brantford because of that."

Atlas achieves high supplier ratings with all its key customers and was named supplier of the year at three different global companies, successes Beattie credits to the strength of these customers' forecasting ability and Epicor CMS integrated functionality, including EDI.

Prior to Epicor CMS, all orders were entered manually and scheduling was done via spreadsheets. Since the Epicor CMS implementation, most key customer business is done via EDI or electronic uploads. "We have traditionally shipped 100 percent on time with our largest customer, which you can only do if your data is perfectly accurate, which EDI ensures, and integrated throughout a strong infrastructure, like Epicor CMS," says Beattie.

Epicor improves inventory accuracy

Beattie also pays close attention to the impact Epicor CMS has on inventory control. "Cycle counting is near and dear to my heart, but with a six-week lead-time on our tubes and one-week on our hoses, cycle counting wasn't even an option prior to Epicor CMS. We backflushed our inventory as we shipped and performed one physical inventory annually, which created more chaos than it solved." By leveraging Epicor CMS real-time shop floor control Beattie now performs cycle counts 220 days per year, contributing to a 98.8 percent inventory accuracy rating, up from approximately 90 percent prior to Epicor CMS.

Though the remote locations have access to Epicor CMS, responsibility for managing all critical day-to-day operational and departmental functions at each plant is centralized in Brantford. "I don't know how we would have handled all these locations if not for Epicor CMS," says Beattie. "At the very least, we'd have been looking at stand-alone systems for each plant, each requiring its own support group."

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► Frank Beattie, IT and Inventory Manager | Atlas Hydraulics

Epicor enables lean IT department

Atlas utilizes nearly all of the functionality of Epicor CMS, with no modifications or customization, which affords Atlas Hydraulics the luxury of a lean IT department. Just Beattie and one other person share part-time responsibilities for managing the system. From the standpoint of functionality, scalability, day-to-day manageability, and dependability of Epicor CMS, Beattie sums up his experience simply. "It fits us to a 'T' and has from the beginning. I just don't think we could have found a better fit for our business."

About Epicor

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