Western Bearing increases the value of the company by investing in technology

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Portage La Prairie, Manitoba
- ▶ Industry: Automotive Aftermarket, Agriculture, and Industrial
- ▶ Number of Locations: 1
- ▶ Website: www.westernbearing.com

Success Highlights

Challenges
- ▶ Increase sales in rapidly changing market
- ▶ Establish stronger connection with technology-focused customers
- ▶ Maximize competitive value of MSC membership

Solutions
- ▶ Epicor® Eagle® for the Aftermarket
- ▶ Epicor Vision®
- ▶ Epicor LaserCat® 3

Benefits
- ▶ Flexibility to expand into new product and service categories
- ▶ Advanced tools to redefine customer experience
- ▶ Seamless compatibility with MSC software

At Western Bearing, building value means investing in technology

Doug Borland loves to tinker. Not with mechanical items, mind you, but with new capabilities, products, and technologies that can contribute to the growth of his second-generation automotive, agricultural, and industrial parts business in south central Manitoba.

As vice president and general manager of Western Bearing & Auto Parts, a longtime member of the Modern Sales Co-operative, Borland isn't satisfied with simply maintaining his book of business, which includes several fleet and manufacturing accounts as well as large farm operations and automotive service garages. Rather, he is continually looking for ways to connect with new customers while enhancing the value he provides to existing accounts.

"I come to work every day with a goal of growing our business—that's what drives me and I love the challenge," said Borland, whose father, Ian, founded the company in 1966. "But that means we need to stay ahead of the changes in our market and be open to new ideas and opportunities."

This commitment to growth explains not only why Western Bearing has been a part of MSC for nearly 40 years, but also why Borland was among the first members to upgrade his business technology to the Epicor Eagle solution. The powerful business management software enables Borland and his 19

employees to more efficiently manage an ever-growing range of products while adding value-added services commonly offered by much larger competitors.

"There are fantastic technologies out there that are redefining customer service in other markets, like banking and retail," said Borland. "I personally never even set foot in a bank anymore—I handle it all online. I believe every business owner needs to embrace these changes and invest in new technology, because if you don't it's going to cost you in the long run."

Changing and growing

Like many parts wholesalers, Western Bearing is encountering almost continuous change in its market and product categories. Oncerobust categories such as power takeoff (PTO) components have experienced steady sales declines. Borland has more than offset this erosion, however, by investing in compressed air systems, bulk oil, and a full range of hand and power tools. Adapting to new market realities is more than simply "finding replacement dollars," said Borland—it's a natural part of making a business more valuable and viable for the next generation.

Increasing enterprise value means taking control of your future, rather than allowing market forces to dictate the outcome, Borland explained. "I look at businesses that have been around for 50 or 60 years but have fallen on hard times and wonder why they allowed themselves to get into that position. That's what motivates me to do what we're doing here."

The power of Eagle software

Motivation is only part of the equation, however. Borland's willingness to take action can be seen in Western Bearing's expanded product and service offering as well as his decision to upgrade to the Eagle solution. "I love Eagle software. Its capabilities are vast, which means we can continue to grow into the software and gain more and more value over a very long period of time," said Borland.

Borland now has access to dozens of capabilities that were not available through the company's previous solution. Now, when customers ask if Western Bearing can e-mail part images, invoices or statements, it can. The owner can also instantly drill down into any of hundreds of business performance indicators to identify opportunities to reduce costs and increase sales. Plus, the Eagle solution's integrated LaserCat 3 electronic catalogue helps make each of his sales people more effective through fast, accurate research and access to a much broader range of products. "Our customers see and appreciate the difference and they're impressed that we are investing in the future," said Borland. "That tells them we're planning to be around for a long time."

An added bonus of the Eagle solution for MSC members is its seamless compatibility with the Epicor Vision software being utilized in each of the co-operative's distribution centers. "Eagle software gives us the versatility to do almost anything we ask of it," Borland said. "I'm already benefitting from the change, but I will eventually be able to double or triple my knowledge and skills on the system to run this business even more effectively."

Think about tomorrow

Borland is the first to admit that investing in new technology isn't cheap and that change can be uncomfortable, but the rewards, he says, are worth it. "Being able to control your future is really important. You might not like the cost of a new system, but what you don't understand is that your old system could be costing you at least as much in terms of the limitations it imposes on you. So you can either choose how and when you invest in new software, or have those decisions dictated to you."

For Borland those decisions have worked out well. Western Bearing continues to enjoy steady growth. Customers are pleased with the company's new capabilities. Employees appreciate having access to the latest business tools. In short, this nearly 50-year-old business is continuing to gain, rather than lose, value in an increasingly competitive market.

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 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.

EPICOR.

Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

📞 +1.888.463.4700   ✉ automotive.marketing@epicor.com   🌐 www.epicor.com