

Elmwood Home Hardware Building Centre

Hardware Retailer Moves from Legacy Software to Modernized Point of Sale Software to Improve Operations and Profitability



Company Facts

Overview

- ▶ Location—Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada
- ▶ Industry—Hardware and Home Center
- ▶ Number of Locations—5
- ▶ Co-op—Home Hardware

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Maintain and grow the business with new, innovative technology

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Eagle N Series®
- ▶ Epicor Training on Demand
- ▶ Epicor Eagle Mobile Lookup
- ▶ Epicor Eagle Mobile Manager
- ▶ Epicor Compass
- ▶ Epicor Mobile Shopper
- ▶ Epicor Mobile RF

Benefits

- ▶ Increase customer service, improve business, and boost the bottom line
- ▶ Enhance customer confidence in business through improved experiences
- ▶ Keep product pricing in line with the market
- ▶ Easily check inventory prices on competitors and readjust business prices
- ▶ Pricing adjustments streamlined by almost four hours



Elmwood Home Hardware Building Centre is a third-generation, family-owned business with five locations based in eastern Canada. As a business made up of 60 percent building supplies and 40 percent hardware, its team has always been busy maintaining the business in order to grow.

Elmwood Home Hardware operated on Epicor Dimensions software for almost 30 years and needed a technology upgrade to push the business forward. “Moving to the Epicor Eagle N Series system was a very good move for us. We looked at different systems, but ultimately selected the Eagle platform because of the great company culture as well as innovative technology,” said Luc Léger, operations manager, Elmwood Home Hardware Building Centre. “It brings new things to the table which increase customer service, improve business, and boost the bottom line.”

Smooth implementation

Implementing new technology into a business is never a small task. Elmwood Home Hardware made sure to lessen the load for its staff to ensure smooth adoption. “We have always had a great core staff, and our turnover isn’t huge. So, we wanted to make sure that the implementation of a new software system wouldn’t discourage our team,” said Léger. “Switching to Eagle software was a very big change for our team; we basically took what they used to do every single day for the last nearly 30 years and completely changed the whole process. The key for preparing our team was to keep implementation tasks and training manageable—we didn’t fit too much training in one day. On top of that, our primary concern was to make sure our customers got in and out effectively and efficiently, which we were able to accomplish.”

“Once our staff quickly became comfortable with Eagle software through the use of the Epicor Training on Demand tool, the key functionalities really came together,” continued Léger. “Then, we started introducing and training more on using the new tools. For example, once we were comfortable with the basic use of the system, we moved on to learn another function.”

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Luc Léger, Operations Manager, Elmwood Home Hardware Building Centre

Relating to shoppers

By using technology and devices that the consumer uses, Elmwood Home Hardware better relates to its shoppers. “When our customers come to our store and say, ‘You’re using an Apple® iPod® to find inventory?’, we know it adds a wow factor to their experience and gives them a sense that we differ from the competition—providing that next level of confidence in our business,” said Léger.

“We look to Eagle software to make us more efficient, and one of the functions that help us with efficiency is called Eagle Mobile Lookup,” continued Léger. “We arm every staff member on the sales floor with an iPod. With the Eagle Mobile Lookup tool, they’re quickly able to lead the customer to the product on the floor, scan it with the iPod, tell the retail price, and the stock count. If a product is out of stock, they can search other locations to see if it’s in stock elsewhere. By using that simple tool, we can efficiently answer nearly all customer questions and serve them faster. Our staff is more engaged with our customers and not asking them to wait and saying, ‘I’ll be right back.’”

All Elmwood Home Hardware store managers and top management also use the Eagle Mobile™ Manager app. “Our staff now has more data detail to

access like gross profit percent, total gross profit, cost, etc. We can also see daily and monthly sales compared to other stores in the family, check on customers’ account sales, credit, and contact information. But, one of the biggest benefits is the Top 100 items sold feature which we use to see what’s selling,” said Léger.

Accurate multistore pricing

“Prior to Eagle software, we occasionally had issues with our multistore budget,” said Léger. “Now with Eagle, those issues have cleared up. Our core material is lumber, which fluctuates heavily in the market and impacts our budgets. Now, with Eagle software we can put a category on the pricing matrix and easily adjust our pricing depending on where the lumber market is at in a particular week. When using the Dimensions software, I would do it manually, basically staying from 5–9 p.m., just punching 300–400 SKUs and making sure that everything is good with pricing. Now, we’re importing it right into the system and done within five to ten seconds. It keeps us more in line with the market and on top of our budget.”

Competitive prices

In today’s highly competitive market, retailers need to know where pricing stands relative to the competition. With the Mobile Shopper tool, you can easily capture and manage your

competitor’s pricing. “We have sent staff out to competitors in the past and there’s nothing worse than showing up with pen and paper—you’re writing prices down, and it’s obvious what we’re up to,” said Léger. “Now, we show up with a mobile phone and accomplish this more inconspicuously, which gives us a competitive edge. We can quickly and easily check inventory prices on our competitors, then return to the office and reevaluate our pricing to be more competitive.”

Automatic data import

“Before Eagle software, we had a lot of manual entry for purchase orders, and we needed a better process to be more efficient and proactive with the right data,” said Léger. “Now, we use the data import tool within Eagle software to streamline all of that and we’ve been able to free up staff to take on other responsibilities. For example, if we bring in a new line of products, the sales reps can send a Microsoft® Excel® file of all the information—manufacturer numbers, descriptions, costs, and retail price. We directly input a range of SKUs and can automatically use the importing tools. There is no manual data that needs to be entered, which also increases our accuracy.”

“Our hardware inventory managers and building supply material manager are very happy with this tool because they’re saving 2–3 hours a day and no longer sitting there punching in 100–200 SKUs, saving them up to three hours. It’s easy to click away and get the right counts that match what Eagle has accurately predicted, and it’s all done within a few minutes,” continued Léger. “The live data in the Compass™ reporting tool is also really a big plus for us—all of this functionality saves time and money. With Eagle software, we have real-time data exactly when we’re looking for it.”

Easy inventory counts

"The Mobile RF functionality is great because the Mobile RF guns give us the information that our older devices didn't, and inventory counting is much faster now," said Léger. "We use them a lot for putting seasonal items away and can easily create lists. For winter

or Christmas stock, we scan every item that goes in a box with Mobile RF guns and then just print up the list, and it's all done. There is no handwriting every SKU. It's just done right then and there. During our year-end inventory review, we are saving two to three hours per store."

"The Mobile RF guns also make customized label-making possible for our stores. We use that for creating and maintaining location maintenance. With Mobile RF guns, as you're putting old stock away and replace it with a new product, you're able to change location right then and there and don't have to go to a computer to change it. That efficiency is seamless," concluded Léger.

About Epicor

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