

Sportsman's Guide

Firearms Sales and Transfers Made More Efficient With Cloud-Based Epicor FFL Compliance Manager



Company Facts

Overview

- ▶ Location—South St. Paul, Minnesota
- ▶ Industry—Sporting Goods
- ▶ Number of Locations—1 Retail Store, 2 Distribution Centers
- ▶ Website—www.sportsmansguide.com

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Accurately manage, organize, and sell significant firearms inventory
- ▶ Improve and streamline record-keeping processes

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® FFL Compliance Manager®

Benefits

- ▶ Improved acquisition and disposition workflows
- ▶ Simplified recording and tracking of firearms inventory
- ▶ Encrypted data and storage in the cloud combined with a manual backup on site
- ▶ Improved the speed and ease of e4473 filing for customers
- ▶ Saved payroll an estimated 200 hours per year
- ▶ Saved an estimated \$900 per month on labor
- ▶ Eliminated 15 hours per week of paperwork

Sportsman's Guide opened its doors in 1977 as an outdoor catalog company. Today, the business focuses on its printed and eCatalogs that specialize in outdoor categories such as hunting, fishing, camping, home goods, footwear, clothing, and, most recently, firearms.

"What makes our store unique is that we showcase up to 70 guns in the store that customers can experience," said Scott Eichstadt, senior vice president of customer experience and operations, Sportsman's Guide. "We also occupy 600 guns that we bring to the market and to the consumer directly from our distribution center. We have a smaller store footprint, but we bring in more guns than many of our brick-and-mortar competitors because we're connected to our warehouse and distribution center. We have real-time access to all the firearms through our catalog and eCommerce business."

Market consideration led to new firearms compliance solution

Sportsman's Guide implemented the Epicor FFL Compliance Manager application, created in collaboration with Orchid Advisors, to seamlessly manage its broad firearms inventory. "Through our core business—direct-to-consumer—we move 200 to 300 guns per day," Eichstadt estimated. "Out of our retail store, we move and transfer roughly 60 firearms per week—or approximately 3,120 firearms per year. We needed a reliable and efficient solution to streamline our firearms operations."

"We considered a number of factors and what was available in the market before we made the decision to select Epicor FFL Compliance Manager for firearms management in our retail location," said Gary Kasper, firearms compliance manager, Sportsman's Guide. "Those factors consisted of the software expense, ease of training for retail associates, ease of use overall, and—of course—ATF certification. Once we determined that FFL Compliance Manager contained those requirements, we made the decision to install it in our business."

"A few challenges that we faced before switching to FFL Compliance Manager included doing traces and inventory searches," said Chris Wiens, product compliance specialist, Sportsman's Guide. "Prior to using FFL Compliance Manager, we had to search through several paperbound books to locate a serial number and identify the disposition to respond to ATF trace requests. The same held true for locating a firearm in inventory. We had to review the paperbound A&D books or conduct an inventory search to determine the inventory status on a firearm. Switching to FFL Compliance Manager streamlined those processes and has made searching for traces and inventory much quicker. FFL Compliance Manager has saved our company a considerable amount of labor and payroll. Payroll savings is estimated at over 200 hours per year and labor savings around \$900 a month."

Quick installation

Easy to use, learn, and install in a business, FFL Compliance Manager is designed to operate on most browser platforms. "The installation process of FFL Compliance Manager was seamless," said Kasper. "After a quick installation, our compliance department tested the

software. The management team became familiar with the software, and then we trained the retail associates. It was easy to learn."

"Training the staff on FFL Compliance Manager was easy," said Wiens. "Fortunately, the application has step-by-step functionality which is straightforward to learn. After a short training period, the staff got very good with the tool, and it has improved the speed at which we process the necessary forms."

Endless business benefits

With compliance tasks now simplified, the Sportsman's Guide retail management team is assured their records are much more accurate. "FFL Compliance Manager has made our records more accurate because the customers and associates are not handwriting the 4473 form. This provides for a precise record-keeping process," said Kasper. "It also expedites the time that it takes to transfer a firearm to one of our customers—the more firearms that we can transfer, the greater profitability for Sportsman's Guide."

"Another valuable aspect of the digital 4473 form in FFL Compliance Manager is it helps guide customers through the form—requiring them to fill in the necessary fields before continuing," Wiens added. "Some of the questions are automatically skipped if they answer a previous question in a certain way, which saves the customer significant time."

"With the digital forms in FFL Compliance Manager, I've had customers come into the store, pick a firearm, complete the digital form, and they're out the door in fifteen minutes," said Andrew McBride, sales associate at Sportsman's Guide. "For paper forms, customers typically complete the entire process in roughly half an hour. Those that use the digital form now have more time to shop in our store."

"FFL Compliance Manager makes our jobs easier because it takes less time, it's quick to navigate, easy to do background checks, and simple to follow up with the ATF when you get a trace request," said Steve Langaki, retail store manager, Sportsman's Guide. "It also helps us work towards our revenue goals, because it frees up time for us to sell more and do less paperwork. I've already cut my paperwork in half and save about 15 hours a week."

Quicker reporting and accurate inventory

"The FFL Compliance Manager has allowed our retail associates to record the acquisition and disposition (A&D) of firearms faster," continued Kasper. "In addition to that, it has enabled us to take accurate inventories by querying the open dispositions and then physically conduct the firearm inventory. As a result, we're much more efficient and accurate—making all the information that Sportsman's Guide has more uniform and easier to access."

"We look at FFL Compliance Manager as an easier, more organized way to get all of our A&D bound book information done in a timely manner," said Derek Weidner, compliance associate, Sportsman's

Guide. "I can take the firearm inventory count sheet report and plug it into a spreadsheet and then do my weekly inventory directly from that by scanning boxes. This saves me at least 45 minutes a week because I'm not flipping through different paper bound books and trying to find a particular firearm."

Peace of mind with the cloud-based solution

FFL Compliance Manager is a cloud-based solution, so there is no software to download or updates to install, and it can be accessed anywhere. "The fact that Epicor FFL Compliance Manager is a cloud-based solution definitely influenced our decision to purchase it," stated Weidner. "We can access it via a mobile device or any desktop computer—in the retail store, our offices, or in the warehouse. If I'm out of the office and someone in the store doesn't have certain permissions, I can go into the software and help with an issue. It also helps to make sure that—from anywhere—everything is running in tip-top shape."

"With FFL Compliance Manager being a cloud-based solution, the data is encrypted, so we have no concerns about the security of our data," said Wiens. "Data storage is in the cloud in addition to a manual backup on site, which is required by the ATF."

Streamlined inspections

Sportsman's Guide is confident that the flexible, prebuilt reports and dashboards will keep them on top of their data in preparation for future ATF inspections. "We have not been audited with FFL Compliance Manager, yet," said Weidner. "When

we do get audited, it will make the overall audit process a lot more streamlined and more efficient. Instead of ATF agents spending hours flipping through a manual book, all the necessary information is centralized. Every gun that goes out is linked to a form, and information can simply and quickly be found.”

Compliance and technology partners for growth

“We define growth as it relates to a retail firearm business having the ability to sell quickly and accurately transfer firearms,” said Kasper. “The more firearms that we can transfer, the higher our sales numbers—we consider an increase in sales numbers as growth. FFL Compliance Manager has supported that growth.”

“I would highly recommend Epicor FFL Compliance Manager to other retailers that are looking for a format to make operations easier,” said Eichstadt. “When we initially opened our firearms business, we partnered with Orchid Advisors. There are a lot of restrictions and guidelines to follow, and Orchid’s knowledge helped guide us and build a strong team at Sportsman’s Guide. A big reason we chose Epicor was because it was evident that they had spent a lot of time with Orchid Advisors making the software specific for firearms dealers and had the retailer in mind when it was developed.”

“In terms of future plans, we want to bring a ‘good, better, best’ model to the market,” concluded Eichstadt. “Our goal is to continue to increase our customer base—our partnerships with Epicor and Orchid Advisors will help us get there faster.”

About Orchid Advisors

Orchid Advisors helps firearms manufacturers, distributors, and retailers achieve compliance and operational excellence through education, technology, software, and consulting solutions that reduce risk, cut costs, and provide expert guidance to make our clients’ businesses more successful and efficient. Orchid Advisors is the trusted firearms industry compliance and operations experts and endorsed by NSSF, the National Shooting Sports Association. For more information, visit www.orchidadvisors.com.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers’ unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.

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