



Epicor Success Story

Advantage Industrial Automation

Epicor Prophet 21 facilitates EDI transactions for Advantage Industrial

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Duluth, Georgia
- ▶ Industry: High-tech Electrical Distribution
- ▶ Number of Employees: 54
- ▶ Web site: www.advantageind.com

Success Highlights

Challenge

- ▶ Identify a Windows-based ERP solutions system that accurately captures historical customer information while streamlining the company's processing, purchasing, and shipping process and offering electronic data interchange (EDI) transaction capabilities

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Prophet 21®

Benefits

- ▶ Provided the ability to process and ship orders in a timely fashion
- ▶ Facilitated EDI transactions and minimized the time and errors associated with handling paper documents
- ▶ Automated internal processes so employees can better serve customers



Advantage Industrial Automation provides industrial control and automation solutions to the food, beverage, water and waste management, consumer products, and materials handling industries, among others. Founded in 1989, Advantage most recently became a subsidiary of Graybar, a leading distributor of electrical, communications, and data networking products. This relationship benefited both companies by joining Advantage's capabilities with Graybar's supply chain management and logistics services to open opportunities into new territories and better serve existing customers. Results delivered span from the implementation of simple control components for enclosures to the design of multi-vendor automation solutions integrating the latest business intelligence software and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems.

"We're not your typical electrical distributor," said David Tatro, CIO/Finance Director, Advantage Industrial Automation. "We don't just take orders, ship boxes, and then invoice customers. We pride ourselves in adding value. We help customers figure out their needs and understand the methods needed to maximize processes and operations."

"Our growth plans have always been to expand with existing customers, while identifying new ones. As a subsidiary of Graybar Electric, our resources and potential are greatly enhanced and we are able to expand into new markets and territories. We are always looking for ways to find efficiencies and improve our processes."



Streamlining internal processes to accommodate ongoing growth

This initiative began nearly two decades ago, when Advantage began the search for a Windows-based ERP solution. After years of research, they ultimately went live with Epicor Prophet 21. This decision was made not only to streamline internal processes, but also to capture detailed historical customer information that could then be passed onto management and new employees as the company continued to expand and grow.

According to Tatro, Prophet 21 furthered this goal by providing the ability to “quickly process orders, purchase products, and get those products out the door to customers.” This includes using EDI extensively with larger customers to reduce the time Advantage employees “spend printing and sending things out, logging into other networks to find key details,” and manually producing and tracking down purchase orders and other extraneous documents.

“Automating processes so people don’t have to re-key things into the system is what Prophet 21 does best.” said Tatro. “The ability to use other tools with the system’s relational databases is at the core of the product. It has also made us function like a much larger organization by enabling us to backfill our own solutions into the single server database.

“Plus, it’s easy to use. A couple of clicks and a purchase order is sent via EDI to our manufacturers. For our largest supplier, we were able to implement VMI (Vendor Managed Inventory). We send inventory information to this vendor via EDI. They do the calculations and provide an EDI of the purchase order, which is immediately imported into our system. Then the product just shows up. In addition, the ability to analyze demand and instantly review minimum and maximum quantities has freed staff to better serve our customers.”

Enhancing customer relations

Other benefits included the automation of transactions using Epicor® Trading Partner Connect® (TPCx) and mapping software features. This has offered the in-depth eCommerce ability to exchange information electronically with customers. For instance, Prophet 21 enabled Advantage to simply and instantly accept transactions and then share purchase and shipping order acknowledgements with one of its largest customers via their new trading platform.

“Prophet 21 has helped us drastically reduce errors,” added Tatro. “The old days of faxing and managing pieces of paper, as well as tracking down files, are done. We are solely focused on growth and meeting customer needs. Epicor knows distribution, and that’s what we do.”

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, hosted, 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.



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