



Epicor Success Story

Links Unlimited

Building a Foundation for Growth With Prophet 21

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Cincinnati, Ohio
- ▶ Industry: Wholesale Trade
- ▶ Website: www.linksunlimited.com



Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Install an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that can scale to seamlessly handle both large and small shipping quantities

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Prophet 21®

Benefits

- ▶ Automated internal processes for employees to serve customers faster
- ▶ Introduced scalability to process shipments in a timely fashion—regardless of order size
- ▶ Gained ability to grow inventory turns by 150% annually
- ▶ Reduce order entry team headcount by 30%

Links Unlimited® is a wholesale supplier to the corporate marketplace—specifically servicing incentive, loyalty, gift-giving, and promotional markets. It establishes relationships with premium brands by marketing, warehousing, and fulfilling orders for their products in the corporate channel. Its full range of services allows it to not only provide the desired products, but also fully support its customers' promotional, loyalty, and incentive programs.

"Prophet 21 wasn't one that came up on the radar when we looked for a new ERP system," said Matt Kookan, chief financial officer for Links Unlimited. "One of the businesses nearby was using it and insisted we come check it out. We went over, and in less than half an hour, our team looked around at each other and said, 'this is absolutely what we need.'"

Setting the right technology foundation for growth

The company recognizes that having the right technology in place is essential for growth. "We were previously on an inexpensive system, so Prophet 21 was an investment for us from where we were," said Scott Kookan, president, Links Unlimited. "However, after being on it for a few years, it's made us realize that you need a core system to be your business' nerve center—you can't just do things on the fly."



“Prophet 21 has a rich set of developer tools that give us the ability to modify it for our needs—whether that’s through tools such as the DynaChange Rules, or AutoOrder, or simply the flexibility it gives us as a SQL-based solution, we know Epicor is a reliable solution for us,” said Brian Schank, chief technology officer, Links Unlimited.

Scalability for a greater future

Prophet 21 quickly opened the door for the company to take on new opportunities. Less than two years after going live, Links Unlimited received an inquiry from a large prospect who required that the company use an EDI-friendly solution. This prospect also wanted it to offer a slew of other reports and processes—precisely the sort of information it could now produce through Prophet 21.

The company estimates it ships close to 1,000 orders a day. However, the seasonality of the business means it can have to ship as many as close to 20,000 orders in a single day. To keep up with this wide and varying range, it relies on the Prophet 21 application programming interface (API). “By leveraging the Prophet 21 API, we are able to basically take in orders from virtually any source—ranging from a file sent through an FTP site to an e-mail—to reduce any uncertainty in the order,” said Schank. “This means we can ship out orders faster, and in turn make our customers excited about the turnaround time for their orders.”

Better forecasting for greater growth

Links Unlimited has also found that with Prophet 21, it can turn inventory faster and create new opportunities to take on large, one-time orders. “Before Prophet 21, we were probably only turning inventory a few times a year,” recalled Matt Kooken. “With Prophet 21, we have been able to turn inventory quicker. This has allowed us to take on large promotional item programs—something that would not have been possible before. It would require us hiring a lot of employees for a short-term basis, but with the inventory capabilities of Prophet 21, this was simple.”

“Once we implemented Prophet 21, we were able to better forecast to be able to see orders in process—which made us better at managing inventory,” stated Scott Kooken. “The SQL-based system allows us to pull all of the information out for us to run our own reports on what’s selling, what’s not selling, which customers are buying more, and which ones aren’t. It’s become a central part of our growth.”

“Epicor listens to our needs, wants, and they are often able to add what we ask into future releases,” Schank said. “The company truly values its user community.”

“Prophet 21 is just such a terrific ERP system,” he continued “It punches above its weight class, and it punches up to the top ERP systems—it can handle everything from EDI, to order automation, to shipping confirmations, to wireless warehouse.”

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.



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