

Interfor (International Forest Products)

One of the World's Largest Lumber Companies Accelerates Growth with Epicor LumberTrack

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Vancouver, British Columbia
- ▶ Industry: Lumber and Building Materials
- ▶ Specialty: Manufacturer of cedar, appearance and specialty, and dimension lumber
- ▶ Number of Locations: 18 mills
- ▶ Website: www.interfor.com



Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Eliminate administrative overhead tied up in operating and maintaining multiple systems
- ▶ Streamline integration of new business acquisitions
- ▶ Prevent data entry errors

Solution

- ▶ Epicor LumberTrack™

Benefits

- ▶ Robust, scalable business software platform at all locations
- ▶ One central database for better data-driven decisions
- ▶ Quick assimilation of acquired mills
- ▶ Timely, accurate information visibility
- ▶ Ability to create custom screens for each job function
- ▶ Streamlined invoicing process
- ▶ IT backbone to help remain competitive
- ▶ Strong business and technology partner

Vancouver-based Interfor is one of the largest and fastest-growing lumber companies in the world. In late 2007, the company identified the need to standardize systems and processes across all of their facilities. Interfor executives decided to consolidate their systems and databases under the Epicor LumberTrack business management software, and never looked back. Switching to LumberTrack software helped them grow rapidly and enabled their business to be globally competitive.

New mill integration time cut dramatically

Before switching to the LumberTrack system, each Interfor mill had its own software. "We had to go into a different system depending on the specific sale or mill location," says Keith Power, vice president of information technology at Interfor. "There was a lot of administrative overhead tied up in operating and maintaining multiple systems. When we acquired a new location, it would take us months to figure out how we were going to integrate it."

Since Interfor has switched over to the LumberTrack system, the company has doubled its number of mills. Interfor's IT team has become very adept at adding new mills to the system. They can take down the old system, convert the data, and install the new LumberTrack system in one weekend. They bring in employees from other mills to train and help the new employees during the first week, and follow up again a few weeks later to make sure all business processes are followed and everything is running smoothly.

Mark Bettencourt, finishing superintendent of the Hammond Cedar Division, remarks that consistency makes the company more efficient: "LumberTrack software has unified the way we do things. All the sales orders across the company are entered the same way, the invoicing is done the same way, and we pay vendors the same way companywide."

Leveraging data for informed decisions

One of the keys to Interfor's business success has been a commitment to make sound business decisions based on market data. "We can't control market fluctuations, but we can control our costs by making better purchasing and sales decisions," says Garnet Gracey, manager of application development at Interfor. "LumberTrack software allows us to collect market data from all parts of the company and put it into the hands of our executives, managers, and salespeople, so they can make better business decisions."

For example, Interfor regularly compares its actual sales prices with the listed commodity prices to measure purchasing and selling performance. The company also uses LumberTrack software to lower its railroad demurrage charges by analyzing data to identify what led to those charges and the change to be made to minimize costs.

Catching errors before they happen

Accurate data is essential to optimizing operations. The LumberTrack User Exit feature allows Interfor managers to set up rules in the system to prevent data entry errors.

For example, the company was able to dramatically streamline its invoicing process by using this feature. "Invoicing is a critical

part of the customer experience, and invoicing errors can be catastrophic to a business relationship," says Gracey. "At Interfor, we take the invoicing process very seriously, and, in the past, we dedicated a significant portion of our sales support staff's time to reviewing invoices for errors. With the User Exit feature, we are able to automate this process and prevent mistakes before they happen. This has dramatically reduced the number of invoices that need to be reviewed by a human, and allows us to redirect the time to other, more productive tasks."

Customizing screens according to job function

The LumberTrack solution is extremely feature-rich, but not every feature is necessary for every employee. Interfor created custom screens in LumberTrack software to display only the information each worker needs to perform their duties.

For example, Interfor developed screens for their export sales team to be able to view each shipment vessel, whereas the North American sales team has no need for this view. "We carefully designed each screen to be crisp, simple, and focused on each person's job function," said Gracey.

Good business and technology partner

Interfor employees enjoy a close relationship with the Epicor LumberTrack software team. "The Epicor LumberTrack team has always been responsive to its customers," continued Gracey. "I commend Epicor for the close relationship with their customers and for prioritizing the product improvements that are most relevant to the majority of users."

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.



Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

+1.888.463.4700 LBM@epicor.com www.epicor.com

Corporate Office
804 Las Cimas Parkway
Austin, TX 78746
USA
Toll Free: +1.888.448.2636
Direct: +1.512.328.2300
Fax: +1.512.278.5590

Latin America and Caribbean
Blvd. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882 Int. 104
Plaza Central, Col. Santa Maria
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, CP 64650
Mexico
Phone: +52.81.1551.7100
Fax: +52.81.1551.7117

Europe, Middle East and Africa
No. 1 The Arena
Downshire Way
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1PU
United Kingdom
Phone: +44.1344.468468
Fax: +44.1344.468010

Asia
238A Thomson Road #23-06
Novena Square Tower A
Singapore 307684
Singapore
Phone: +65.6333.8121
Fax: +65.6333.8131

Australia and New Zealand
Suite 2 Level 8,
100 Pacific Highway
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia
Phone: +61.2.9927.6200
Fax: +61.2.9927.6298

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