



Vaagen Brothers Lumber

Company Facts

- Location: Colville, Washington
- Industry: Lumber and Wood Products
- Sales Profile: Manufacturer of dimension lumber and boards
- Number of Locations: 4
- Web site: www.vaagenbros.com

“LumberTrack V10 provides a quantum leap in usability and productivity, as well as reporting and analytic capabilities that allow us to adapt our business practices to reflect the market. This coupled with some of the best customer support in the industry make LumberTrack our go-to business software for lumber production, sales, and accounting.”

Erik Andersen, Systems Analyst | Vaagen Brothers Lumber

Vaagen Brothers Lumber has a long-standing reputation as one of the Pacific Northwest’s top wood products companies, producing a wide variety of dimension lumber and boards for domestic and international markets.

Vaagen has used Epicor LumberTrack at their sawmills for over a decade. Erik Andersen, Systems Analyst at Vaagen Brothers, says they rely on LumberTrack for most of their business information used in day-to-day and long-term optimization of their operations. “LumberTrack is the go-to software for us because we have virtually everything all in one package. It’s the whole deal. You can do everything from tracking your production all the way through sales and accounts receivable.”

Customizable V10 will boost productivity

Andersen describes Vaagen’s decision to upgrade to the latest release of LumberTrack: “LumberTrack V10 builds upon a strong history and proven platform, and provides a new level of customizability almost unheard of in the industry. You can customize the screen displays just for you—just for your login.”

Success Highlights

Challenge

- Use technology and information to optimize lumber production, market response, and corporate profitability

Solution

- Epicor® LumberTrack™

Benefits

- Efficient sales and accounting staff with minimal non-value-adding tasks
- Analysis to optimize value-added processes and identify high-margin products
- Optimized product selection for particular production runs
- Optimized kiln scheduling and planer operation

“The ability to personalize screens is a quantum leap in increasing usability and productivity,” Andersen continues. “You can really pare down the user interface to where it suits you. You can set personal default information, and you can hide fields so that you can just tab through the fields you always use. So, say you’re a shipper in one location; you can set that location as a default and then hide the field. Data entry is much faster.”

“We’ll also use the new user-defined fields to add extra information about our products,” says Andersen. “We have thousands of products, so it’s impractical to build logic into each product code. What the sales guys would really like is the actual description of the product to make it easier for them to do the data entry.”

Vaagen will also use the expanded Quick Transfer function—a non-invoiced shipment that transfers costs from one location to another—to generate the paperwork for domestic and cross-border transfers.

Long history of productivity gains

Vaagen’s business philosophy is to continually streamline operations, eliminating tasks that do not add value and optimizing the operations that do add value. LumberTrack has been a foundation for efficiency and profitability gains through process improvement and strategic data analysis.

Day-to-day, the real-time production and inventory data provided from LumberTrack and its Tag Track barcode tagging stations helps Vaagen’s lean sales staff pre-sell and be responsive to customers. With complete customer histories and credit limits on their screens, sales people can often complete orders on the first call. Further, invoicing and accounts receivable are streamlined due to LumberTrack’s integration with the accounting software. What used to take several people hours a day is now done automatically.

Data used for optimization and profit

“LumberTrack’s reporting and analytic capabilities, both built-in and user-generated, allow us to closely scrutinize and adapt our business practice to reflect the market,” says Andersen.

Vaagen uses LumberTrack extensively to track lumber returns by species and grade using that information to help decide what timber to cut and what not to cut. Immediate feedback on yield and trim loss

by work order helps production supervisors optimize manufacturing parameters to get a particular out-turn from their lumber.

The kiln supervisors use LumberTrack daily to optimize kiln scheduling, monitoring what the sawmill is producing, what species and dimensions and grades, as well as how much is in inventory, so that he can plan his kiln schedules for optimum drying. Vaagen also analyzes how moisture level impacts grade recoveries through the planer. And lastly, they have the ability to track the production history of its lumber to follow up on yield issues or customer complaints.

People make the product

Andersen also remarks that the people that support and develop LumberTrack make it their business to understand wood products manufacturing and distribution, which makes LumberTrack a stronger product. Andersen himself contributes to product direction by participating as a member of the LumberTrack Advisory Council.

“I’m happy to give back to a company that supports us as much as they do,” says Andersen. “It’s pretty tremendous that they have an advisory council, and it’s made up of all kinds of different businesses so that they get a holistic idea of what will satisfy the user base as a whole. I don’t know anyone else that does that.”

“LumberTrack has some of the best customer support in the industry,” Andersen remarks. He quips: “You know, you can put up with marginal software if you have good support. But the fact that you have good support and really good software is fantastic!”

About Epicor

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