



Stine Lumber Company

Company Facts

- Location: Sulphur, Louisiana
- Industry: Building Materials
- Number of Employees: 700
- Web site: www.stinelumber.com



Stine Lumber Company is among the top 100 building materials dealers in America. Its sales figures place it fourth among 6,000 Ace Hardware retailers worldwide. With 12 locations in Louisiana and Mississippi, Stine serves a 50/50 mix of consumers and professional contractors.

Prepared for Disaster

Information technology has become prevalent in the retail industry, streamlining processes throughout the enterprise. But if information systems suddenly go offline, business operations can become crippled. This is especially true at the checkout counter, where personnel and customers are accustomed to modern point of sale (POS) systems that quickly and efficiently move consumers through the sales process.

Like many multi-location retail operations, Stine Lumber leverages a centralized operating model that enables its 12 stores to function as a single cohesive enterprise. However, no IT network is infallible.

Any number of circumstances can interrupt communications between outlying locations and the central server.

But whether extreme weather conditions strike, a construction crew accidentally severs a cable, or any other condition disrupts data flow to headquarters, sales can continue without missing a beat. That's because Stine Lumber uses the Epicor offline point of sale solution.

"We know that at any point in time, communications can easily drop offline," says Robert Spears, CIO at Stine Lumber Company. "When that happens, our Epicor offline point of sale system instantly takes over all sales-related functions until the connection to our central server is restored. Customers get the efficient checkout service they're accustomed to, and we don't lose any sales."

User-Friendly Technology Ensures Business Continuity

As a longtime user of Epicor Falcon, Stine was instrumental in the development of offline point of sale. In 2008, Robert and other leaders at Stine requested that Epicor

"We would have lost half our sales during a hurricane if we did not have an offline system in place for sales operations. With Epicor Offline point of sale, an interruption in data flow will never jeopardize quick and efficient checkout service for our customers. In a retail environment, I don't see how you could do without it."

Robert Spears, CIO | Stine Lumber Company

“All sales-related peripherals such as bar code scanners and printers function on the offline system, and all our pricing information is there, including any special promotions we might have going on. It’s virtually transparent to our customers and our employees.”

Robert Spears, Stine Lumber Company

develop an offline server system for Falcon that could handle sales processes during a communications outage. “We gave the developers at Epicor a list of features that we would like to see in the offline system,” Robert says. “30 to 45 days later they delivered it to us.”

Epicor offline point of sale is a small separate Linux™ server that sits at-the-ready at remote store locations. Robert says users require virtually no training on the offline system. When communication to the central server is interrupted, employees simply click an offline system icon on their desktop and log in. The offline servers run the same POS software that runs on Stine’s live server.

One of the things Robert and his IT team like about offline point of sale is the speed and simplicity of synchronizing data with the live system once communication is restored. “Previously, we used an offline system from another technology vendor,” Robert explains. “On that system, if we were offline for even as little as 30 minutes, it could take two hours to get data balanced and moved back into the live system. With our Epicor system, we can be offline for eight hours and it only takes a few minutes to resynchronize to the main system. It’s very quick and easy. And it provides complete reports so we can ensure that all the data was reconciled successfully.”

Open For Business When Customers Need Them Most

A typical communications outage between one of Stine’s retail stores and its central servers usually only lasts a few hours. But because Stine’s stores are in a hurricane zone, the company has experienced extreme weather catastrophes that isolated outlying locations from headquarters for as long as a week.

“During a disaster, our sales triple because everyone needs lumber and supplies to protect their property,” Robert explains. “After Hurricane Rita, most businesses in the area were closed and their windows were boarded up. Although on a different system at that

time, we had so many customers thanking us for being open we knew we needed offline POS to safeguard our business.”

Robert estimates that Stine’s retail locations in the hurricane zone would have lost as much as half their sales if they did not have an offline backup system in place for POS operations. “A ten-item order could take us as long as ten minutes if we had to write checkout tickets by hand,” he says. “Multiply that by 10 or 20 customers who are trying to get home to repair a roof or a broken window, they would literally drop their items and walk away.”

“With offline point of sale, we can speed a ten-item order through in about a minute,” he continues. “Our customers get the materials they need. And we avoid lost sales as well as the errors that would inevitably occur during manual processes. Afterwards, you would need to resolve all those errors and then manually key all the data in. With this system, we don’t worry about any of that.”

Epicor offline point of sale preserves Stine’s reputation for being the go-to place for building materials in its region. “Our customers know that our stores will be open for business, whether it’s an emergency situation or a normal day,” Robert summarizes. “offline point of sale enables us to maintain that reputation. In the retail environment, I don’t see how you could do without it.”

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industries. With more than 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise, and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit www.epicor.com.



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