



Customer Profile

Brentwood Industries improves decision time, customer service with Infor SyteLine



Facts at a glance

Product: Infor SyteLine

Industry: Discrete Manufacturing

Country: USA

"Five minutes after an event on the shop floor, we're able to make decisions based on the data."

**—Kenneth Kemp, IT Manager,
Brentwood Industries**

About the company

Brentwood Industries, founded in 1965, is based in Reading, Pennsylvania and boasts a history of excellence in the design, engineering, and manufacturing of high-quality thermoformed plastic products. The company is a leading supplier for manufacturing customers in the cooling tower, water/waste water, transportation, agricultural, battery, medical, lawn and garden, construction, and electronics industries. Brentwood offers a wide range of products globally under their own brand in addition to manufacturing plastic products for other manufacturers. To learn more, visit www.brentwoodindustries.com.

Setting the strategy

A longtime Infor™ SyteLine customer, Brentwood routinely reassesses its technology infrastructure. "Every seven to ten years, our company wants to re-evaluate what's out there to see if there's a better product for our business," says Kenneth Kemp, Brentwood's IT manager. Like any other company in an industry as competitive as plastics, Brentwood constantly seeks to increase workforce efficiency, product quality, and operational excellence by improving the speed of access to data throughout the company.

The most recent assessment came at a crucial moment. Despite being mired in one of the toughest recessions that manufacturers had ever seen, Brentwood still maintained a healthy 45% rate of growth over six years.

The company needed its technology to support that level of growth while keeping margins strong. Managers also wanted to consolidate their list of software vendors to improve global visibility for all operations and provide users easier access to data.

Getting business specific

After a thorough study, the decision to stay with Infor SyteLine couldn't have been more obvious. "We have a very stable product that's allowing us to grow internationally," Kemp says. "As long as that product keeps growing and working for us, there is no decision."

Company leaders decided to upgrade to the latest version of Infor SyteLine to address the pressing need for a solution that would let users access data more directly and quickly in order to make better decisions faster. By upgrading the Infor solution they'd come to trust over the years, the company could improve performance without adding risk.

They also stood to improve many aspects of daily operations, from basics such as mailing invoices, purchase orders, and customer orders, to providing more detailed information to sales employees. The company also sought to improve internal workflow by eliminating monthly manual entries of inventory and financial information between different, unconnected information systems.

Typically, a major ERP version upgrade of such size and scope would require extensive external vendor involvement and a small army of on-site consultants. The project not only involved upgrading six existing domestic plants, but implementing the software in the Brentwood international plants in Thailand and the Czech Republic as well. However, Brentwood's IT staff knew that the reliable framework and built-in flexibility of Infor SyteLine meant that they could handle the bulk of the upgrade work themselves. Except for added staffing to help handle post-implementation support, Brentwood's IT staff handled the vast majority of the upgrade in house.

Seeing results

The upgrade exceeded all expectations. At a total cost of about \$200,000 US including hardware, software, and consulting fees, the project went from inception to completion in less than a year with no disruption to the business. The immediate business benefits offset the upgrade costs in short order. "Five minutes after an event on the shop floor, we're able to make decisions based on the data," says Kemp. "That was one of our biggest pain points before—making valid business decisions in a timely manner—and we've gotten past that. Now we can focus more on customer service."

Customer service gained speedier access to information for an even bigger boost. "In the past, a customer would call for status on a shipment, and our customer service people would have to hang up, go talk to someone else, run a few reports, and then call the customer back," says Kemp. "Now they just go into the system with the customer on the phone and give them an immediate update."

Doing business better

Brentwood's steep growth curve shows no sign of leveling off, thanks to the company's increasing ability to respond to customer needs, maintain strong margins, and achieve a high degree of manufacturing excellence. "Immediate access to the data has given us much more efficiency in key areas of the organization," Kemp says.

"We've experienced increased cycle count efficiency, an increase in on-time shipments, and lower direct labor due to better shop floor visibility." Through the use of automation and the upgrade, the company has reduced the cost of manufacturing labor from 8.6% to 4.8% and cut scrap to less than 2% while boosting margins by 2%. In the end, the upgrade paid for itself in less than a year and created savings that will last indefinitely.

Brentwood's customers are benefitting as well. Brentwood now boasts a 30% faster ordering time while achieving a 98% on-time delivery rate. By fully implementing the Infor SyteLine planning and scheduling engine, Brentwood gives customers quicker and more reliable promise dates on orders while maintaining leaner inventory and making sure that orders are always priced profitably and competitively. As a result of a wide range of operational improvements, Brentwood is now the leader and low cost provider in the cooling tower and waste water industries.

Above all, the project illustrated the value of working with a solid technology partner. "Infor always does a good job of planning for the future," Kemp says. "They listen and include enhancements that come from the customer."



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