



Utility Supply Company

Company Facts

- Location: Indianapolis, Indiana
- Industry: Water, sewer, and storm drainage products
- Web site: www.utilitysupply.com



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Bill Pelham, General Manager | Utility Supply Company

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Help a Midwestern distributor improve tracking of thousands of product SKUs stored at four separate locations, apply the latest pricing to products, and enhance company-wide billing, accounting and collection procedures

Solution

- Epicor® Prophet 21®

Benefits

- Help increase profit margins by alerting employees to low availability levels and the replacement of stock at the best price and without urgency
- Provide a snapshot of all the items currently in or out of stock at each locale, for a 99.5 percent inventory accuracy rate
- Offer a paperless backup system for all transactions, which also easily enables the tracking of customer interactions, ranging from sales and invoicing to collections

Founded in 1962, Utility Supply Company is a family-owned independent underground water, sewer, and storm drainage products distributor in Indiana. Headquartered in Indianapolis, the company supplies thousands of products from leading manufacturers to surrounding cities, towns, and contractors from four locations including its corporate headquarters.

"This industry, especially throughout this area, has become incredibly competitive," says Bill Pelham, Utility Supply Company General Manager for the past 15 years. "The marketplace has tightened not only due to the overall economy, but also because the local municipalities have cut their budgets. As a result, our continued success depends upon our ability to consistently meet customer needs with top-quality products backed by quick, reliable deliveries and the best possible pricing. For example, in addition to a fleet of 14 delivery vehicles, our salespeople drive pickup trucks so they're always available to take smaller parts to customer sites at a moment's notice."

Accurate inventory control

In 2008, the company's dedication to service expanded with the search for a new inventory control system that would better track thousands of product SKUs stored at all four locations, apply the latest pricing to products, and enhance billing, accounting and collections procedures. After an extensive review process, Utility Supply Company chose the Epicor Prophet 21 enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, which went live at the company in 2010.

"After three years, we're still learning all the benefits of Prophet 21," explains Pelham. "It offers so much that we're still only using about 50-60 percent of its features. But what we have learned, has worked seamlessly and smoothly. This is particularly true of the value it has brought to our inventory control process. Prophet 21 forced us to achieve a 99.5 percent accuracy rate, while really cleaning up all of our 'loose ends.'"

According to Pelham, Epicor Prophet 21 made it "virtually impossible" for the company's sales reps to sell or promise unavailable items to customers, by providing a snapshot of all the items currently in or out of stock at each locale. It also eliminated potential conflicts in trying to fulfill orders with products that were already allocated to other clients, which was a regular occurrence with the company's old system.

Increased profit margins and ease of use

In addition to providing a paperless backup system for all transactions, Epicor Prophet 21 easily enables the tracking of Utility Supply Company customer interactions, ranging from sales and invoicing to collections. Perhaps most importantly, the system has helped the company to increase profit margins by alerting employees to low availability levels and the replacement of stock at the best price and without urgency.

"I use Prophet 21 for virtually everything," offers Ben Neyer, the company's inventory controller. "Plus, it's so much easier to use than the old system. All of the information is right there and every screen looks similar. It only takes one or two mouse clicks to find what you need. What used to take hours is now done in minutes, from order entries and pricing updates, to helping our inside and outside sales teams better communicate and coordinate on purchases based on the availability of specific items."

Pelham concludes, "So far, Prophet 21 has worked close to flawlessly. It's done exactly what we wanted and couldn't be more user-friendly. Looking ahead, we'll continue to explore its full set of capabilities."

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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