Customer Profile

Augusta Sportswear teams with Infor to grow its business

Facts at a glance

Product: Infor M3
Industry: Fashion
Country: USA

"Once we had Infor M3 in place, we discovered a big increase in the transactional volumes we could handle. This was an important realization because it allowed us to grow organically without the need for additional resources."

—David Frank, Executive Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Augusta Sportswear Group

About the company

Since its beginning in 1977, Augusta Sportswear has gone from a single storefront to a sophisticated, successful manufacturing and distribution enterprise with four U.S. facilities in Georgia, Ohio, Kansas and Washington state, as well as three manufacturing sites.

Augusta offers a vast product line of team uniforms, athleticwear, outerwear, warmups and accessories and has more than 1,700 employees.

Longtime Infor™ fashion customer, U.S.-based Augusta Sportswear®, has seen a lot of change since it opened for business 30 years ago. A strategy for growth, both organically and via acquisition, led to a quest for an ERP partner that could support Augusta's business well into the future.

Background and business challenge

Augusta Sportswear started in 1977 in the rear of a main street tailor shop in Augusta, GA. Over time, the business evolved into canvas sport and tote bags, and from there, it grew into the Augusta Sportswear Group of today – a company of multiple divisions and brands with three manufacturing sites.

Thanks to both acquisitions and organic growth, Augusta's product line now consists of teamwear, decorated apparel and promotional products. With its acquisitions of Ohio-based Holloway Sportswear, Kansas-based Jones & Mitchell Sportswear and Washington-based High 5 Sportswear, in addition to Augusta's own label, the group now includes several divisions, each with its own sales force, merchandise catalogue and product releases.

Even before all the acquisitions and new product lines were in place, Augusta knew it needed advanced functionality for manufacturing and distribution and that it needed a way to tie the systems together. The company also knew it wanted a broad-based fashion industry package that was updated on a regular basis.

> **"Having everyone on same system has improved consistency across all divisions. We now have reliability, stability and communication throughout the company because we have a single source for the truth."**
>
> **—Wade Vann, CIO and VP of IT, Augusta Sportswear Group**

Why Infor

The quest for a fashion-specific ERP solution to support its growth and expansion strategy began in 1999. To start with, Augusta analyzed its key requirements for a new system:

- Must offer fashion-specific functionality (style, color and size matrix)
- Must be reliable (system uptime, functionality)
- Must interface with external systems
- Must be able to integrate with other systems – distribution and eCommerce
- Must be useable–especially for task-oriented roles (order entry)
- Must provide visibility across divisions and geographically-dispersed operations
- Must be best of breed, if possible, in one solution and upgradeable

Augusta found in the Infor Enterprise Management System (known then as Movex from Intentia) what it didn't find in other candidates.

"We were looking for a provider with a solution that could grow and expand with us and that had an established R&D process for continuous product development," says Augusta's Chief Financial Officer Pat Harris. "We also knew we needed a solution that was scalable to a multidivision platform, and we found the answer in Infor M3."

With Infor M3, Augusta got a consolidated package offering visibility for the financial, sales and manufacturing aspects of the business, which has enabled the group to prosper and offer the variety of products and brands it is now known for.

Implementation

Augusta went live with Infor M3 in September 2000 and found that the implementation process actually encouraged a new management philosophy.

"We were forced to think cross-functionally and put new teams together," says Pat, "and while we were at it, we also made a point of documenting processes for future implementations."

Business benefits

Even though Augusta had put time and energy into growth through acquisitions, organic growth was a top priority as well.

"Once we had Infor M3 in place, we discovered a big increase in the transactional volumes we could handle," says Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing David Frank. "This was an important realization because it allowed us to grow organically without the need for additional resources."

In addition, the order-to-quote to order-to-delivery process was speeded up so much, from hours to minutes, that Augusta actually had to slow it down.

"We were finding that if a customer called right back and wanted to make a change to their order, they couldn't because it had already been processed," adds David.

Once an order was placed, estimating delivery and availability also became much more precise. "We could now provide the exact freight, down to the cubic dimensions and weight of the box, which is helpful with invoicing," says David.

Even though Augusta's business has few seasonal spikes, maintaining an appropriate order mix in stock is now easier and manufacturing can be spread out over 12 months thanks to Infor Lawson Supply Chain Planner, which helps in managing work and manufacturing orders as well as distribution.

In general, Augusta is better able to manage capacity, reduce inventory and improve customer service since implementing Infor M3.

In fact, new CIO and VP of IT Wade Vann did his own assessment when he started in May 2009.

“I saw with a fresh perspective how important Infor M3 is to all divisions within Augusta,” he says. “The system is extremely stable and does an excellent job of meeting our needs across all divisions. Specifically, integrated financials has made a big difference for us. We can now review detailed metrics for all divisions every month, which gives us much greater visibility.”

The future

Looking ahead, Augusta plans to continue its collaboration with Infor. In fact, the Infor/Intentia merger was seen as a positive move from Augusta’s perspective since the company is counting on Infor’s continuing support.

Augusta will keep up its aggressive focus on growth, both organically and via strategic acquisitions, and anticipates continuing return on investment from Infor M3. The company is now performing a value assessment to evaluate the costs and identify the business benefits of an upgrade to the latest Infor version.

If, as David Franks says, a sure indication of perfect business execution is to wake up each morning with no outstanding customer orders, then Augusta Sportswear has the system in place to support that goal.

“Having everyone on same system has improved consistency across all divisions,” says Wade. “We now have reliability, stability and communication throughout the company because we have a single source for the truth.”

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INF1279932-1293837-EN-US-0113-1