Customer Profile

Endries International locks down savings with Infor Distribution SX.e, SCM

Facts at a glance

Product: Infor Distribution SX.e
Industry: Distribution
Country: USA

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—Todd Ficher,
VP and Corporate Information Officer,
Endries International

About the company

Endries International is a worldwide distributor of Class E materials, mainly consisting of fasteners and products for the maintenance and repair organization (MRO) and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) markets. Its 120 locations span the globe, with the corporate office located in Brillion, Wisconsin.

Endries is an industry leader in providing quality products and services using the most advanced technology-based solutions on the market. It is positioned to be the single-source supplier for all customer product needs including fasteners, pipes, valves, and fittings, as well as electrical, fluid power, mechanical component part, and MRO supplies. To learn more, visit www.endries.com.

Setting the strategy

In the early to mid-1990s, Endries International took a close look at its homegrown software and decided that it needed a major upgrade. With an aggressive growth plan, the company knew that it needed to adopt robust and flexible applications as a solid foundation to support long-term growth and manage all the business changes along the way. Its objective was to be able to continually upgrade its technology with minimal disruption to its business processes while seeking new ways to streamline those processes.

According to Todd Fischer, vice president and corporate information officer at Endries International, “At that time, our revenues were only about $15 million, and we were focusing on growing the business significantly. Our goal was to be over $100 million by 2000, and we knew the existing software just couldn’t get us there.”

Getting business specific

Endries began the search for a vendor and application that met every requirement along its path of continual growth. “We conducted an extensive review of five different software suppliers,” says Fischer, “and Infor™ came to the forefront on several important points. For one, the company had a solid base of employees and showed every indication it would be with us throughout the years. We wanted to make sure that our software backer was going to support us for the long haul because we were making a major strategic decision.”

Flexibility was a primary application feature for Endries during the selection process. “To meet our growth targets, we needed something that was flexible for our customers as well as for us,” notes Fischer. “It needed to expand with our entire user base.”

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Endries also believed that another characteristic of the application was important: the ability to meet the specific needs of the company without destroying the core of the software. Fischer adds, "Because we knew that our business was going to change, we were looking for an application that we could continually upgrade, making it do what we needed it to do for the industry over time. We chose Infor Distribution SX.e because it proved to be a strong package that met all of our requirements."

Seeing results

How successful was the company? Fischer declares, "After Bob Endries set revenue goals of $100 million and we implemented the Infor software, it performed so well for us that our business grew quickly. Our processes improved hand-over-fist. With Infor Distribution SX.e, we added inventory, customers, and personnel, and within five years we reached our $100 million revenue mark."

Endries International continued to look for ways to streamline its operations and improve inventory accuracy and productivity. The next step was to employ an integrated module of Infor Distribution SX.e. "We looked at other products on the market, but we didn't see any major advantage over Infor Distribution Sx.e Total Warehouse Logistics (TWL). We got it up and running within a reasonable time and avoided the huge expense of interfaces with other systems."

Fischer explains the specific reason for using Infor's Warehouse Management System. "We deployed it to minimize loss of product and increase our picking lines per hour. After TWL, everyone could locate products—whether they were in picking, shipping, or receiving." Even with 60,000 to 80,000 products in the warehouse, the picks per hour increased significantly. Fischer says, "Before implementing TWL, our pick rate was about two-and-a-half to three lines per hour. After TWL, we started running at about five-and-a-half lines per hour. We didn't reduce staff, but we avoided hiring new staff—a huge gain for us."

Inventory accuracy at Endries improved so much after the application was implemented that the company no longer needed to do year-end inventory counts. "Having 100,000 products in the warehouse makes it difficult to do a full cycle count," Fischer adds. "TWL allows us to do cycle counts as we are running the business. Our accounting firms now do just samplings, and our accuracies are up around 99.7%. We've eliminated the annual four-day shutdown by doing continuous counting throughout the year."

The next level in Endries' growth evolution was inventory management. After implementing Infor Demand Planning, the company tested it in several warehouses and found that it helped save dollars in safety stock. "Our savings on just one warehouse was half a million dollars with Infor Demand Planning—an ROI within one year." The company is rolling it out to additional warehouses and expects the same return.

Fischer summarizes the success of his company's new system: "We've increased our picking and delivery accuracy as well as shipping efficiency. We're able to continue to grow, make upgrades, and keep our business on the leading edge of technology with Infor products. We've had big paybacks."

The company's mission is to drive toward continuous improvement for its customers, and it looks for the same in its suppliers. "Infor has helped us continually improve and grow our business until we are now at $700 million, including other divisions. We love the software."

In summary, Infor Distribution SX.e with Total Warehouse Logistics and Infor Demand Planning have helped Endries International to:

- Increase revenue from $15 million to $100 million over a five-year period
- Increase pick rate from two-and-a-half lines per hour to five-and-a-half lines per hour
- Improve inventory accuracy to 99.7%
- Eliminate yearly inventory counts by being able to do continuous counting
- Save half a million dollars in warehouse safety stock in one warehouse alone in just one year
- Increase delivery accuracy and shipping efficiency

Doing business better

Endries International has served as a reference for Infor for many years because of a mutually loyal partnership. Fischer adds, “Whenever we run into problems, I know that I can count on Infor to be there to solve my problems—over the long haul. That gives us confidence and a huge competitive advantage.”

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About Infor

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