



San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind

Aptean Intuitive ERP Enables Contract Manufacturer to Stay Competitive

CASE STUDY

Customer Details

Not-for-profit company. Provides employment to individuals who are blind. Currently in Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. Over 90 percent of products produced are sold to the U.S. government. Products include office products, oil spill kits and textiles.

Industry

Diversified manufacturing

Aptean Solution

Aptean Intuitive ERP

Challenges

- Changes in market conditions threatened the loss of as much as 60 percent of SALB's business
- Needed new distribution channels to reach their customer base
- Urgent need to reduce order-to-shipment time for core products
- Knew that an ERP system would help turn around products and services to customers at the speed they required

Benefits

- Dramatically shortened order-to-shipment cycle
- Reduction in part shortages. Vast improvements in invoicing
- Better view of business activities at a strategic level and for daily operations

Overview

San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind (SALB), a not-for-profit company providing employment to individuals who are blind in three states: Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. SALB has three distinct divisions: The Industries Division, the Retail Stores Division, and the Rehabilitation Division. Currently, there are 350 total employees in the organization.

The Industries Division employs over 200 employees in the manufacturing sector of the company. Over 90 percent of all products produced in this division are sold to the United States government. The products produced are diverse, and include an office products line with items such as: mechanical pencils, rollerball pens, highlighters, and Clam Clip® dispensers and refills.

In addition, SALB manufactures 8 to 80 gallon oil spill kits and 26 different absorbent products, such as biodegradable cotton and wool pillows, snakes, and pads.

SALB also has a sizable textile department that produces retention systems for the U.S. Marines, advanced combat helmet retentions and uniforms for the U.S. Army, uniforms for the U.S. Navy, and tie-down straps for the U.S. Postal Service. In addition to its work with the federal government, SALB produces aerospace insulation blankets for top aerospace companies. The operation is ISO 9001:2000 certified, as well as AS9100 B certified (aerospace), and is the only blind or disabled manufacturer in the U.S. that has obtained both of these distinctions.

The Challenge

Sudden changes in market conditions threatened the loss of as much as 60 percent of SALB's business, forcing them to move quickly to find new distribution

channels to reach their customer base. Additionally, to stay competitive, they had an urgent need to reduce order-to-shipping time for their core products. "In light of the changing competitive environment, time was of the essence," said Joy Gonzales, SALB IT Manager. "We knew the implementation of an ERP system would help us turn around products and services to customers at the speed they required and keep SALB in the ballgame."

The Solution

To meet these extreme external challenges, SALB was quick to adopt e-commerce technology for selling goods on the Internet directly to government agencies and private firms. They were also aggressive about implementing an ERP system to manage accounting and manufacturing activities and meet customer demands for fast turnaround.

SALB had several requirements for their ERP system. The product had to be easy to use, quick to implement, allow for process reengineering, and integrate their manufacturing and accounting processes so all data was available from one central location.

SALB selected Intuitive ERP for three major reasons. First, the product satisfied a need for Microsoft-centric technology. Intuitive ERP is developed with 100 percent Microsoft technology, which allowed SALB to integrate seamlessly with other Microsoft® applications such as Excel, Outlook, Project, and Word. Secondly, the product was user-friendly, which contributed to a rapid implementation and required little training time for users. And lastly, the consulting and technical support teams exhibited a high level of expertise and competency.

"Prior to implementing Intuitive ERP, the SALB environment consisted of multiple applications on multiple platforms running redundant processes," said Gonzales. "Adoption of Intuitive's technology puts SALB on the cutting edge."

SALB's Results

SALB saw vast improvements in inventory management, invoicing and management decision-making capabilities as a result of the Intuitive ERP implementation. Prior to implementation, managing inventory was a complicated task and resulted in stock outages and overages. Invoicing was a labor-intensive activity that took too long. In addition, management decision-making was hindered by a lack of information.

"Aptean Intuitive ERP has helped San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind streamline the company's operational efficiencies through detailed costing analysis and has made a significant impact to the bottom line."

Joe Langley

Vice President,
San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind

Intuitive ERP provided SALB with a disciplined material requirements planning process and shop floor scheduling that have combined to reduce part shortages, increase inventory turns and automate operational activities. The integrated system also provided the management team with a better view of business activities at a strategic level, as well as for daily operations.

Additionally, the organization as a whole dramatically shortened the order-to-ship cycle time, an advantage that has proved to be absolutely critical.

SALB's Reaction

"Not only has Intuitive ERP improved our profitability by identifying areas in the manufacturing process that could be improved," stated Vice President Joe Langley, "but saved carrying costs in inventory and provided a system that allowed us to ship all products next day delivery without carrying excess inventory."

Interested in learning more about Aptean's Intuitive ERP? Please contact your account manager or email us at info@apteen.com.



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