



Hammond Group

Reducing IT Costs And Increasing Productivity

CASE STUDY

Customer Details

Hammond Group, Inc. is focused on serving the world's battery industry and enabling lead-acid chemistry for advanced energy storage. Hammond brings more than 88 years of experience to automotive, industrial, and renewable energy storage battery manufacturers.

Industry

Chemicals

Aptean Solution

Aptean Ross ERP

Challenges

- Lengthy implementation time and growing overhead costs with tier one ERP supplier
- Two unsuccessful CRM system migrations

Benefits

- Decreased ERP-related IT costs
- Certificates of analysis created within ERP
- Traceability from raw materials to finished product
- Portals for customers to manage their own accounts

Hammond Group, Inc. is a global specialty chemical company with a philosophy of delivering value to its customers through technology innovation, continuous improvement driven by the quality systems and the Hammond tradition of responsive technical support. Their customers include Fortune 500 companies and many recognizable US brands.

Challenges

It was about a decade ago that Hammond Group started looking at its own processes so that it could help its customers become more productive. As a chemical company with plants in the US and abroad, Hammond Group knew that if the company was to grow and maintain its reputation for customer care, it needed to invest in systems that would cut costs from its operations while still allowing it to focus on its customers.

Because the company was global, they immediately turned to tier one suppliers of Ross ERP to handle their financial operations, and a large CRM vendor to handle customer care. What they didn't count on was the long implementation time, growing overhead costs, and continuous battles with vendors. So they traded their relationships with the tier one suppliers, sued and won for damages in one case, and started over.

The company they selected to replace their current suppliers was Aptean of Atlanta, Georgia, which focuses on mid-sized process manufacturing companies with a global reach. Since that time, they have implemented Aptean's Ross ERP and Pivotal CRM with tremendous success.

“We implemented Ross ERP and our ERP related IT costs decreased by 39% in the first year of operation,” says Gerry Kaoukis, IT director for the Hammond Group. “We monitor our customers very carefully and are very proactive with our customers. We call customers and ask them about our products, about the quality of the products and the quality of the service that they receive from us. That’s how we get close to our customers.” According to Kaoukis, knowing the information about the customer, what they buy, when they buy, how much they buy, and why they buy, helps Hammond keep customer relationships strong. Hammond uses both Ross ERP and Pivotal CRM to manage the relationships.

According to Hammond’s Halox Division president Ray Rex, the company decision to move to Aptean’s Pivotal CRM came on the heels of the successful Ross Enterprise installation. “We suffered through two painful CRM system migrations already.” Rex says. The company didn’t want to go through another, and the Ross/Pivotal solution was the system chosen by the users after a rigorous evaluation of three systems in the final cut. Even as head of the IT organization, Gerry Kaoukis is proud to point out that the decision to go with Aptean wasn’t made in an IT ivory tower. “We had all the power users in the room. It was not a decision of just one or two people. The users tested the systems and asked the questions. And the users who were the ones who made the decision to go with Aptean.”

The Solution

Hammond Group implemented Ross ERP and Pivotal CRM to handle both front and back office needs. Both solutions have portals that allow customers to manage some elements of their own accounts, including pulling certificates of analysis, something extremely important to its many customers in the chemical industry.

Kaoukis and Rex both say the company has made many additional process improvements that make the 39% savings even more valuable.

- **Customer Service:** When a customer calls, Customer Service representatives have a complete history of the customer on one screen, while taking the order on a second screen. It makes customer service reps more

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IT Director

knowledgeable, and brings the customer closer to the rep. Hammond can provide customers with paperwork and reports that customers ask for. Customers can pull their own certificates of analysis from the customer portal if that’s how they want to do business.

- **Global Management:** The ability to operate globally from Indiana gives management a handle on what is happening worldwide.
- **Product Costing:** The Hammond Group now has the capability of looking into who they buy materials from. They can guarantee landed costs, compare prices and transfer costs savings to our customers
- **Product Development:** If a customer wants Hammond to build a product for them that will give them an edge in the market place, the company does that and follows up in the ERP system. “It helps our customers, and they appreciate that,” says Kaoukis.
- **Quality:** Every product that comes out of productions is tested against the customer specifications. No product leaves the dock without meeting specifications. In the rare cases when something is produced incorrectly for a specific customer, Hammond has the ability to look at the ingredients and the mix, and learn if they can sell it to a customer with a different set of requirements.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Certificates of analysis are created in the ERP system for every product sold. Because we know that the products that come in are certified, and we know exactly what

lots and what content goes into every single product, we do not have to manually create the certificates and it save both our staff and our customers a lot of time.

- **Sample Requests:** E-mail groups help the company make sure samples are handled properly, and get to the customer on time. Sampling is handled and tracked in the CRM system.
- **Technical Service:** All calls are managed and tracked within the ERP solution, and are available to customer service as well as technical service.
- **Tracking and Tracing:** Hammond needs to know where every lot of every given material is at every time. The Ross ERP solution allows us to know exactly where every lot is at any given moment, from finished product all the way back to the raw material that comes in the door.

Results

Hammond planned for a five month implementation for the ERP System to meet a “Go Live” at the start of a new fiscal year. “We finished the implementation in three months and were under budget,” says Kaoukis. “I can exceed my customers’ expectations now. With the Ross ERP, I have all the information that I need to

provide my customers with the customer service and the technical service that they deserve. It allows us to be in the front of technology, and our customers see that.” The Pivotal CRM solution was also installed in less time than was allotted and met budget.

Kaoukis says it’s the way the two products work together that has brought the company closer to the customers. “I can provide my customers with extensive data on the products that they buy. I can keep track of their technical requests. We believe that that is one of the reasons that our customers come back to us for more, and we like to be able to tell them ‘yes, we can do that for you’ when they ask us for information.”

Kaoukis and Rex agree on the belief the winners in business will be the ones who invest in technology. Rex says that companies cannot ignore the benefits that working with a top-ranked software company brings them. “When I start to see the kind of integration that happens with data collection, maintenance modules, and how much easier it makes the job in the plant, I see it as something that you have to have.”

Interested in learning more about Apteian’s Ross ERP? Please contact your account manager or email us at info@apteian.com.



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