EPICOR

Building and Lumber Suppliers Power More Possibilities with ERP Made for Them

8 Customers Report Their High-Impact Results

Contents

Introduction

Go beyond quick references and sound bites to learn how eight customers use Epicor for Building Supply ERP solutions to make impactful, business-defining changes. Their stories tell about how software designed for the building supply industry gives them the ability to address overall efficiency and costs.

They also share how they tackle complex challenges with relative ease to setup entirely new processes or respond quickly and flexibly to disruption.

Their stories include details about how they improved results for specific areas of their businesses including:

◆ Workflow improvements that increase margins, drives growth, and strengthens their ability to compete.

◆ Data and flow of information that connects their business, smooths processes, and improves delivery and dispatch.

◆ Inventory control that improves accuracy and manages complex pricing structures.

◆ Superior customer experiences that provide better and faster service, access to online accounts, and visibility into order status.

Read on to discover how Epicor customers are doing business better with solutions made for building suppliers.

Epicor for Building Supply
Customer Stories

Results with Epicor

- Gained visibility into customer metrics to improve profitability and customer partnerships

- Provided in-depth information to make informed business decisions

- Boosted customer satisfaction and loyalty, with more accurate deliveries

- Avoided costly disputes with a mobile app that lets drivers easily document deliveries

Wilson Lumber Company
Efficient Workflows to Grow Business

Since 1949, Wilson Lumber Company has exceeded the expectations of Huntsville, Alabama-area homeowners, builders, and remodelers. The business offers top-quality lumber and building products, excellent service, and competitive prices. In addition to selling building materials, cabinets, and closets, Wilson Lumber also manufactures windows, doors, and trusses.

Wilson Lumber built its reputation on one simple foundation—putting customers first. To keep that foundational idea at the forefront, the business runs its operations on the Epicor® BisTrack™ business management system.

More Efficient Workflows to Grow Business

Wilson Lumber uses key functionality within BisTrack software like point of sale (POS), quote and order management, inventory control, and purchasing to process both simple and complex transactions. "Epicor BisTrack software makes process workflows more efficient and helps us budget, forecast, and set operational goals so that we can remain a successful and growth-oriented business," said Robb Wilson, president, Wilson Lumber Company. "It gives us the information needed to make more informed business decisions and improve customer service."

More Competitive With Customer Comparison

Understanding which customers are profitable (and why) can result in significant net profit growth for any business and increase its competitiveness. "We are a more competitive business because of BisTrack software," said Wilson. "We specifically use the BisTrack Customer Stratification tool to gain competitive advantage in terms of discovering who our most (and least) profitable customers are.

Customer Stratification lets us determine which factors and metrics should impact our customer rating. Currently, we measure sales dollars per delivery, gross margin, average rate to pay, customer loyalty, and more. It helps us compare our customers with each other and equate exactly how much money we're making. This gives us the knowledge we need to understand the gap between our customers' transactional gross margin and our company's profitability."

"Epicor BisTrack software makes process workflows more efficient and helps us budget, forecast, and set operational goals so that we can remain a successful and growth-oriented business."

*Robb Wilson, President | Wilson Lumber Company*

Deliveries Rapidly Recorded

The BisTrack Delivery solution is a mobile application that helps drivers easily record deliveries and pickups. Drivers can quickly capture delivery time and location, pictures of goods delivered or picked up, and customer signatures. "Our drivers use tablets armed with the BisTrack Delivery app to record and document deliveries and pickups," said Wilson. "They can easily take photos of every delivery drop site. Before, the drivers would need to carry digital cameras with them all day and then return the memory card at the end of the day. The dispatcher would then have to go through and organize all the photos. Now, everything is automatically updated, which prevents many costly customer disputes and makes others easy to resolve. Our office staff and customers appreciate that deliveries and pickups are timelier, more accurate, and complete."

"Our drivers use tablets with the BisTrack Delivery app to record and document deliveries and pickups."

Robb Wilson, President | Wilson Lumber Company
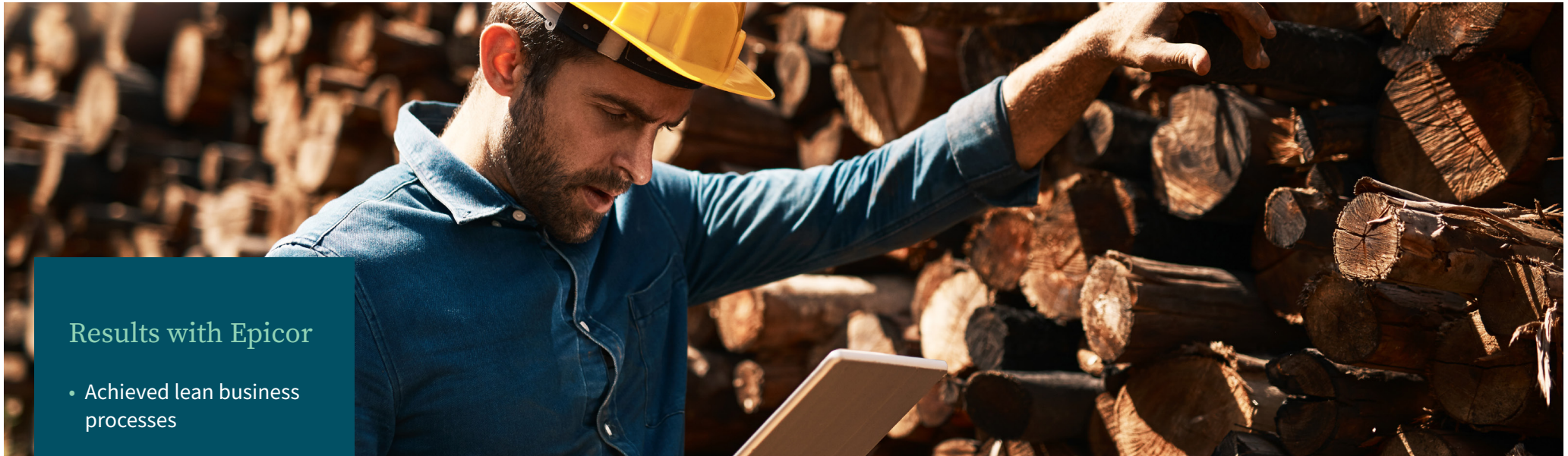
Results with Epicor

- Achieved lean business processes

- Saved time responding to inquiries about order deliveries

- Delivered faster purchasing/transfer replenishment with fewer stock shortages

- Reduced freight charges by combining multiple orders into purchases

- Increased retail margin 3% using individual item margin control

Sears Trostel Lumber & Millwork
Lean Processes and Intuitive Business Intelligence

Since 1929, Sears Trostel Lumber & Millwork has had a reputation for delivering exceptional customer service and high-quality lumber and millwork throughout the Mountain States region. The company manufactures at its Airpark location and sells a wide variety of moldings, lumber, sheet goods, and flooring from its Riverside location.

BisTrack Selected for Lean Processes

Sears Trostel selected the Epicor BisTrack solution in part because its design is consistent with the "lean thinking" pervasive throughout the company. "We do lean manufacturing, so we look at how smoothly processes go, how you can eliminate waste," explained Curt Viehmeyer, one of the owners and general manager at Sears Trostel. "We had been on DMSi, and one of the big deals about BisTrack software was you could get where you wanted to go without wasting time maneuvering around the system. All the areas in BisTrack software are interconnected, so it's easy to get the information we need quickly without backing out to a main area and coming back in a different path."

Saves on Headcount

Viehmeyer gave an example of how the interconnections in BisTrack software save one full time equivalent (FTE) responding to inquiries about order deliveries. "The dispatch and delivery functionality in BisTrack software is excellent. Anybody can find out the status of a delivery. You can see what truck it's on and where else they're going on that day. Before we'd have to call the dispatch people. It's a huge time saver. It probably saves us a person a year."

Intuitive Data Analysis Drives Optimization

According to Viehmeyer, BisTrack software's data analysis and business intelligence (BI) tools are intuitive and easy to use. "I'm not a SQL guy, and I can still create smart views," he said. "I created a smart view of scheduled C.O.D. deliveries where there's still money outstanding. The sales team sees it and knows they need to call that customer to get credit card payment over the phone. And the delivery people know to check with the sales guy before they take it."

"The BisTrack cubes provide some really good information where you can really drill down and analyze the data," added Viehmeyer. "We used cubes to determine the minimum and maximum inventory levels for suggested orders. We pulled sales histories for items that helped us calculate minimum and maximum. It was done by a temporary employee who knew how Windows applications should work but had never seen BisTrack, and he just flew through it."

The result has been fewer stock shortages thanks to real-time replenishment alerts and stock on hand that more closely matches historical demand. Plus, time to prepare for and create purchase orders has dropped from two hours to about 15 or 20 minutes.

> *"All the areas in Epicor BisTrack software are interconnected, so it's easy to get the information we need quickly without backing out to a main area and coming back in a different path."*
>
> *Curt Viehmeyer, Co-Owner and General Manager | Sears Trostel Lumber and Millwork*

Operations at Peak Performance

BisTrack software has also helped reduce the costs of fulfilling special orders. "Special orders appear on an assistant manager's dashboard as a purchase order for approval," Viehmeyer explained. "He can see what the customer is looking for and combine it with other purchase orders to meet minimum quantities and get better freight rates. It's helped reduce our freight costs."

Viehmeyer also appreciates that he can see the work orders at each location and scheduled delivery dates at a glance. "We meet our delivery dates 98 percent of the time," Viehmeyer said. "Having access to our order delivery schedule gives me a better idea of when I can get something done for our customers. When another sales person has entered an order, I can confidently give our customer a delivery date on the ticket and know that's the date they're going to receive it."
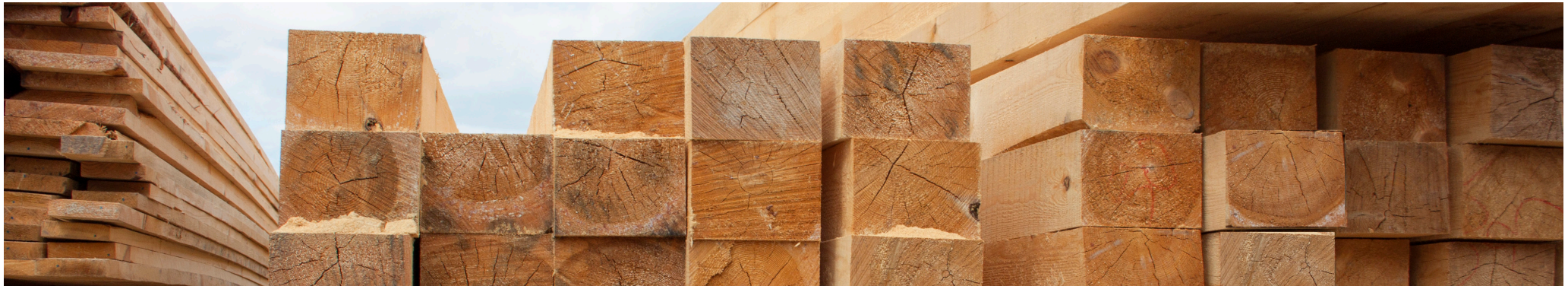
"We meet our delivery dates 98% of the time."

Curt Viehmeyer, Co-owner and General Manager | Sears Trostel Lumber and Millwork

Margins up
3 Points

BisTrack has also helped improve margins in two ways—monitoring margins in real time and adjusting prices on an item-by-item basis. "Margin exceptions pop up on my dashboard," said Viehmeyer. "It flags the stuff I need to look at. I'll go talk to the sales people or check if my selling price is wrong—that helps hold the margin up. There was huge downward pressure on margins on the wholesale manufacturing side during the recent slow period, but BisTrack helped us manage that."

"The other part is being able to set margin on individual products, making sure the competitive ones stay competitive, and looking for opportunities to take a little more margin on other products. BisTrack allows you to do that," Viehmeyer added. "In retail, our margin percent is up three points, so the BisTrack solution has helped us increase margins."

Love Your Computer System

Viehmeyer sums up the impact of BisTrack within Sears Trostel by saying, "Ask yourself, how many times have I said, 'I love my computer system?' With BisTrack, I say it all the time."

Results with Epicor

- Achieved 16% growth and 17% growth in successive years

- Improved gross margin by more than 1%

- Established accurate, easily accessible business information

- Improved decision-making to support growth and encourage a superior customer experience

Dartmouth Building Supply
Access to Essential Data

Dartmouth Building Supply (DBS) was founded in 1984 and has since grown into one of the largest independent, family owned and operated building material suppliers in southeastern Massachusetts. The company runs a successful operation consisting of a core building materials supply business, an on-site millwork facility, a premier kitchen design center, and a land development company.

A Superior Customer Experience

DBS has always been a leader in bolstering innovative ways to better serve its customers. To encourage a superior customer experience and reduce operational inefficiencies, DBS implemented Epicor BisTrack software.

"We decided to implement the Epicor BisTrack solution because our legacy system was falling behind with adaptations to current conditions and the data retrieval necessary to manage future growth," said Jack Parquette, vice president of special projects, DBS. "Additionally, the ability to set appropriate goals for our business was difficult with our old software system. Now, with BisTrack software, we have all the data and tools we need for accurate business information. This helps us make the best decisions we can to support business growth and encourage a superior customer experience."

Enhancing Delivery Operations

BisTrack helped DBS look at the business in a different way—specifically when it comes to product delivery and enhancing operations.

"In terms of managing our deliveries, the BisTrack solution and its Journey Planner module helps immensely," noted Parquette. "Our business is 50 percent special orders, and we complete around 150 deliveries per day. Any dealer trying to handle delivery and yard inefficiencies knows the value of efficient operations and turnaround time. BisTrack software has given us more robust information than any ERP system I've ever used—and I've used six. Last year, our business outperformed the market with 16 percent growth. I couldn't imagine trying to manage this type of organic growth without the BisTrack solution."

Business-Wide Improvements

"BisTrack software has given us the ability to glean specific, actionable data on demand and in a customized and useful format to manage our business," Parquette added. "For example, the related document storage and access to every aspect of transactions, strong overview of sales and customer performance, and streamlined back-office functions have all increased our operational efficiencies to quickly identify aspects of our business that need attention. Then, using that information, we can seamlessly formulate specific action plans to address issues and improve processes.

"We have gained a competitive advantage with the BisTrack solution through gross margin improvements of over one full point—which is huge—while maintaining accelerated growth. Because of better information provided by BisTrack software, we have been able to improve turns and GMROI and made major product and supplier improvements due to a more detailed analysis of several segments— moving away from less profitable segments and business."

"Not to mention, by refining overall operational efficiencies and compiling tools to support our customers in the management of their businesses, we have greatly enhanced the customers' experience," he concluded.

"With BisTrack software, we have all the data and tools we need for accurate business information. This helps us make the best decisions we can to support business growth and encourage a superior customer experience."

Jack Parquette, Vice President of Special Projects | Dartmouth Building Supply

Results with Epicor

- Quick access to information about any location from anywhere

- Time-saving communication, transaction processing, problem resolution

- Easy training and consolidation for acquired locations

- Worry-free upgrades

- Ideas and support from user community

Viking Lumber
Customer Service Excellence and Multi-Location Management

Viking Lumber implemented Epicor BisTrack to help the five-location company run more efficiently and uphold its tradition of excellence in customer service and product excellence. Two years after the implementation, Viking Lumber acquired Rhoades Building Products and standardized on Epicor BisTrack as the company-wide business management system.

"We know we're on a premium system," said Chris Carroll, system administrator at Viking Lumber. "There was no question that we'd continue to use Epicor BisTrack, and our new employees loved it."

"The Epicor BisTrack solution helped a lot when we brought on the four new locations," said Maureen Flanagan, owner/operator of Viking Lumber. "Being Windows based, it wasn't so daunting to learn the software and continue to do business."

Time Savers:
Workflow Automation and Smart Views

"In the beginning, the new employees wanted reports and printouts like they were used to, until they realized that they can get up-to-date information with Epicor BisTrack Dashboards, and Smart Views," said Carroll.

"Smart Views are very helpful," Flanagan said. "I use them for everything."

Carroll also appreciates that BisTrack automates their processes and streamlines workflow. "Epicor BisTrack does a lot of things automatically behind the scenes that are definitely helpful," he said. "For example, invoice cost adjustments flow through the whole system right from start to finish, making the adjustment automatically. That's a huge help for us."

"Anyone at any location can find the documents they need sitting at their desk, instead of calling the branch or head office staff and having someone dig through the files and fax it to them."

Maureen Flanagan, Owner/Operator | Viking Lumber

Related Documents Relieves Information Bottleneck

"I see people finding more information themselves because it's readily available," said Carroll. "If there's a discrepancy with any billing or products purchased, we can track the information and look at the history of the data pretty quickly."

"The Related Documents part of Epicor BisTrack is awesome," said Flanagan.

She explains that staff at the head office pay the bills for all 10 locations. "Anyone at any location can find the documents they need sitting at their desk, instead of calling the branch or head office staff and having someone dig through the files and fax it to them. There's less of the irritation that comes when one person doesn't see the urgency the same way the other does."

Enhancements and the User Community Make Epicor BisTrack an Even Stronger Product

"The Epicor BisTrack team is responsive and very forward-thinking," said Flanagan. "It seems just as you're thinking something would be nice to have, there it is in the next release."

"The most impressive thing is the frequency of new feature releases, and what has improved in the product," said Carroll. "I don't hesitate to do an upgrade. We don't have to close out, or wait until month end or year end. With Epicor BisTrack, I just push a few buttons and walk away."

Carroll and Flanagan recognize the contributions of not only the Epicor BisTrack solutions on-going product development, but also the actively involved Epicor BisTrack User Community that share ideas and templates for success. "You always come away from the user conferences feeling rejuvenated," said Flanagan.

Carroll concurred, "The Epicor BisTrack user group is worth its weight in gold. If you're thinking of Epicor BisTrack, go for it."

"If you haven't considered Epicor BisTrack, then give me a call! It's not a problem," said Carroll. "I'm thankful to the people we talked to before we bought, and it's definitely good to return the favor. The support is there, the functionality is there, the technology is great."

> *"If you're thinking of Epicor BisTrack, go for it. The support is there, the functionality is there, the technology is great. The Epicor BisTrack user group is worth its weight in gold."*
>
> *Chris Carroll*
> *System Administrator*
> *Viking Lumber*

Results with Epicor

- Competitive advantage of outstanding responsiveness and customer service

- Processing 2.5 times more orders with the same staff

- Better support for retail

- Inventory accuracy within 0.1%

- Thousands of dollars saved by knowing cost of manufactured products

Austin Hardwoods
Unprecedented Inventory Control

The owner-operator of Austin Hardwoods says that BisTrack is one of the best investments they've ever made. It saves time, making employees more productive and effective. It provides outstanding inventory accuracy and cost data from their value-added manufacturing operations. Most importantly, BisTrack software serves up instant access to reliable information so that Austin Hardwoods outshines their competition and expands their retail customer base.

"Nobody in our line of business in Denver can do what we can do," said Randy Hass, general manager at Austin Hardwoods. He believes that BisTrack helped Austin Hardwoods expand the retail customer base of their hardwood molding, sheet goods, and woodworking supplies store. "We don't have an IT guy here, but BisTrack is easy to operate and comes with so much

in the standard package. I love that BisTrack can make a bunch of lumberyard guys like us look really good."

"BisTrack is instrumental in our customer service," explained Chris Stypinski, vice president and owner of Austin Hardwoods. "It's pretty impressive when someone calls to ask about a specific type of South American hardwood, and within a couple of seconds we can email them the data sheet."

Stypinski agrees that BisTrack software allows them to answer customer inquiries with confidence: "We have such a better grasp on our inventory now. If BisTrack said we have 100 board feet out there, we probably have 100 board feet," Hass added. "Everything is in BisTrack in lineal feet and by the piece. So I can tell a customer immediately how many 14-foot lengths I have."

Fast Responses Grow Customer Base

"It's a strategy for sales," Hass continued. "With all the data and information available quickly, we can get quotes out faster. If they get what they need within minutes, customers won't pick up the phone and call other guys. Who's got the time?"

"We're gaining customer base," said Hass, explaining that they've seen an increase in retail customers—the remodelers, the walk-ins, the do-it-yourselfer, handyman traffic—resulting in an increase from 75 tickets per day to 200. "There's no way we would have been able to handle the volume of tickets we write today without BisTrack."

BisTrack also manages four separate pricing structures for their different customer segments.

"Epicor BisTrack has definitely paid for itself. We made a lot of pricing adjustments because we were able to figure out exactly how much it cost us to run a machine. I know it saved us thousands and thousands of dollars."

Chris Stypinski, Owner and Vice President | Austin Hardwoods

Efficient, Organized and Effective Team

Austin Hardwoods uses BisTrack to track sales people's performance. "It gives us great data, broken down by area and by product line. It allows us to guide our sales people to service their customers better in certain areas," said Hass.

Stypinski concurred that BisTrack has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of their sales people. "We have six counter sales people, and they all have their own dashboards showing outstanding quotes, back orders, orders on hold and out for delivery collections. It keeps them organized and reminds them to follow up on things."

On the road, BisTrack helps Austin Hardwoods outside sales people make more productive sales calls. "You can be at a customer's place and view everything that you'd see here at the store," said Hass. "They can prepare for the meetings by looking at the information stored in BisTrack, check the customer's website, see what projects they're doing, what products they're buying, their financial statistics. Once inside with the customer, they can view real-time inventory, and can place orders right in front of them."

"We've even used Journey Planner to improve sales trip routing to reduce mileage," added Hass.

Time-Saving Tools for Management

"I love, love, love the dashboards," Stypinski said. "I use one for accounts receivable, that sorts aging accounts from oldest to newest so that I pay attention to the worst accounts first. And everything is integrated. I can right-click on a sales invoice, and see if there was a purchase order, or go to scanned documents to see which guy pulled it in the yard or which guy delivered it. It's a huge time-saver resolving problems. I save easily an hour a day."

"In purchasing, BisTrack generates a report of suggested orders based on the inventory min/max levels we set up," Stypinski continued. "The store purchasing guy pulls that up, and…bam! It creates the purchase order for him."

Both Stypinski and Hass like the messaging feature in BisTrack. "I don't have to track somebody down. I can just send them a message," said Stypinski. Hass added that it's a bonus to be able to stay in touch with the business while away. "Saturday, when I don't work at the store, I can turn on my laptop and look at what's going on. I can send messages without having to open email or make a phone call. I was able to keep up while I was away for a week. It's a simple thing, but for us it's light years ahead of where we were."

> *"We make a higher margin on retail than we do on an industrial customer, so our margins are up because we're able to manage inventory and our customer base better."*
>
> *Chris Stypinski, Owner and Vice President | Austin Hardwoods*

Savings From Near-Perfect Functionality

BisTrack has also brought unprecedented inventory control to Austin Hardwoods. "Our inventory control has never been better. The last couple of counts, we were within one tenth of a percent. It's so close it's amazing," Hass said. "We used to be off $40,000 to $90,000. We'd spend time recounting, making adjustments, sometimes we'd write it off. It was a bookkeeping nightmare. These days, that would trigger an audit."

Stypinski explained the source of their inventory imbalance was the way they tracked inventory at their milling and molding shop. "We built a generic waste factor into everything we did," she said. "It was an average. So we never knew how much we made on a specific order."

"Now we know exactly how much wood we used and what we have remaining. We adjust the inventory right then and there," Stypinski explained. "We made a lot of pricing adjustments after we went onto BisTrack, because we were able to figure out exactly how much it cost us per foot to run a machine. I can't put a dollar figure on it, but I know it saved us thousands and thousands of dollars."

Impeccable Cost Savings

"BisTrack is one of the top three investments we've ever made," Hass affirmed. "It doesn't produce money the way our equipment and machinery does. It saves money. It lowers our operational costs, and that turns into a gain for us."

Hass also pointed out that BisTrack allowed them to cope with their shift to a stronger retail customer base and a higher volume of tickets. "Without BisTrack, I would have had to double our personnel."

Stypinski said that onboarding BisTrack was a very difficult decision to make just as the economy was starting to slow. "It has definitely paid for itself."

"BisTrack is one of the best investments we've ever made. It saves money. It lowers our operational costs, and that turns into a gain for us."

Chris Stypinski, Owner and Vice President | Austin Hardwoods

Results with Epicor

- Lower delivery costs due to centralized dispatch

- Faster daily, monthly and annual operations and financial reporting

- Easier consolidation of branch information

- Faster rebate calculations and check matching

- Business intelligence to assist in decision-making and identifying opportunities

Dryco Building Supplies
Real-Time Visibility into Costs and Margins

With eight locations in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario, Canada, Dryco Building Supplies is a leading supplier of drywall, insulation, acoustical tile and related products for wall and ceiling construction.

The company recently upgraded business management systems to Epicor BisTrack. "We wanted a system that would encourage best practices and tighten our procedures," said Dan Mauro, national operations manager at Dryco Building Supplies. "Epicor BisTrack was the most flexible and best-suited for our business."

BisTrack
Ideally Suited for Drywall Supply

Dryco managers say there are a number of reasons why BisTrack is particularly well-suited for suppliers of drywall and related products, including flexibility in inventory descriptors and rebate management.

"You can use different units of measure for your inventory, so that purchasing and AP can enter it in one unit of measure, and you can invoice a customer in another unit of measure," said Mauro.

Dryco also appreciates the ease with which sales orders are entered and inventory accuracy is maintained, making use of kit creation and product tallies to track the different sizes of a parent product. "The staff at our sales desk can quickly enter a drywall order," said Mauro. "They just enter, for example, three 8s, two 9s, four 10s, and six 12s, and the system pulls the correct inventory SKU and puts separate line items on a ticket for our dispatch to pull. It's really fast, which is important."

"Epicor BisTrack is helping us manage our business and margins. We can view data by branch or by product, and use that information to make decisions and look at possibilities."

Rhonda Sandve, Controller | Dryco Building Supplies

"Our costs and margins are much more accurate month to month."

Rhonda Sandve, Controller | Dryco Building Supplies

Margin Control Through Rebate Management

Rhonda Sandve, controller at Dryco described how BisTrack helps Dryco manage their discount and rebate programs. "It's quite complex, with multiple levels of discounts, pricing plateaus, and rebates that can come monthly, quarterly, or yearly depending on the supplier or the buying group," said Sandve, adding that knowing the final cost of a product and matching rebate checks to orders is difficult. "To calculate it all manually takes a lot of time and is prone to errors."

Now, BisTrack makes it easier to sell product profitably and keep track of expected rebates. The system allows companies to build the anticipated rebate into the cost of the product, with a safety buffer applied if desired, to ensure sales people don't give away the rebate margin. BisTrack accrues rebates, then calculates expected total for each period which is then cleared when rebate checks arrive. "Our costs and margins are much more accurate month to month," said Sandve.

Visibility to Optimize Business Decisions

For Sandve, the best part of BisTrack is the accessibility of sales history and business information across their branches.

"Before, information wasn't consistent across branches and we couldn't rely on it," said Sandve. "It was time-consuming to get reports, and mostly not even worth the time to put it together. Now, BisTrack has so much flexibility and a lot of user-friendly tools. It's helping us manage our business and margins."

Real-time visibility and the BisTrack dispatch and delivery capabilities have allowed Dryco to centralize dispatch for four branches. "We have visibility into all the deliveries we're doing in the trading area," said Mauro. "We can get answers to customers faster, and we arrange to deliver from the closest geographic branch, cutting labor costs, fuel costs, and wear and tear on the truck. BisTrack manages the centralized dispatch model for us."

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>
> *Dan Mauro, National Operations Manager | Dryco Building Supplies*

Improved Inventory Accuracy

Dryco managers also cite numerous tasks that take far less time now and are more accurate because of Epicor BisTrack, including generating daily shipments reports, performing inventory counts, and month-end reporting.

Sandve said that reconciling inventory counts is much faster for fast-moving products. Before, delays in count data entry often made it too late to investigate variances. "Now, we're able to count it, run a variance report the same day, and do recounts immediately," said Sandve.

Mauro described the time-consuming process previously undergone daily to produce a consolidated daily shipments report, "Our branch managers would manually tally how much gypsum shipped every day. Across all branches, we have close to a hundred deliveries a day. So that's 100 entries of information from the paperwork into an Excel spreadsheet that someone else would then filter and manipulate into a report. Now, with BisTrack, it's completely automatic."

Sandve also described a similar process to manually consolidate month-end reports from the various branches into an Excel spreadsheet. "It was open to errors, and took a bit of time," said Sandve. "Now it's just a press of a button."

Results with Epicor

- More productive and efficient staff

- 33% reduction in purchasing workload

- Higher fill rates

- Better customer service

- $500,000 less inventory and associated cost

Chinook Lumber
Higher Productivity

Epicor BisTrack has become part of Chinook Lumber's culture, according to Joost Douwes, the company's general manager and one of the first and longest-standing users of BisTrack software. Chinook Lumber re-designed their processes using efficient BisTrack workflows, role-based dashboards, business intelligence, and analytics tools. Today, they've not only streamlined business activities, but also have introduced cost-saving programs such as Vendor Managed Inventory and online customer account access, which helped Chinook Lumber improve profitability while improving customer service.

Efficient Workflows

Chinook Lumber users immediately discovered efficiencies, including a dramatic reduction in paper flow thanks to BisTrack software's Related Documents feature, which links all related documents to one another for easy search and retrieval.

JDouwes also praised the way BisTrack software guides users in their job functions: "One of the big strengths of BisTrack is the workflow it drives and the way it helps you identify the workload and the volume of work outstanding at each function, from picking to shipping."

Douwes explained that Chinook needs 33 percent fewer purchasing staff for the same volume of purchases due to features such as Suggested Ordering, which streamlines inventory replenishment for pre-negotiated suppliers.

Further, Chinook Lumber saw improved productivity and performance by configuring BisTrack software's environment based on the tasks and responsibilities of key functional roles (retail sales, contractor sales, inventory, AP/AR, executive).

"We created Smartviews and Dashboards for each role, to push data to them so they can do their jobs better in real-time," Douwes explained. "They get all the information they need so customer responses are faster and better. We've seen better fill rates because of it."

"It took about $500,000 in inventory off our books, and we add an incremental one percentage point of margin on our bottom line."

Joost Douwes, Vice President and General Manager | Chinook Lumber

Program Offloads $500,000 of Inventory Costs

Chinook Lumber also established a Vendor-Managed Inventory (VMI) program, whereby a vendor owns the inventory on Chinook's yard until it is sold. BisTrack software's flexible and powerful inventory and cost management models make VMI product sales easy to track and transparent to sales staff and the customer. About 10 percent of Chinook's 17,000 products are part of the VMI program. "It took about $500,000 in inventory off our books, and we add an incremental one percentage point of margin on our bottom line," Douwes said.

Customer Access to Online Account Information

Douwes was impressed with BisTrack software's modern design and integrated web services. "We saw BisTrack as a platform we could build on to be a better partner in our contractors' endeavors," said Douwes. "Through the BisTrack Web Track online portal, we give customers access to their order information on our system. BisTrack software gives them credible reports on their jobs, which leads to better analysis of their projects and helps them distinguish themselves in the marketplace."

"We want to provide our customers with more than just sticks of wood," said Douwes. "Giving our customers access to their project order information is just part of our commitment to exemplary customer service."

"We want to provide our customers with more than just sticks of wood. Giving our customers access to their project order information is just part of our commitment to exemplary customer service."

Joost Douwes, Vice President and General Manager | Chinook Lumber

User Community Fosters Collaboration

"If you want to take advantage of today's technology to make your processes better, BisTrack software is the answer," said Douwes. "Moreover, the people who develop and support BisTrack software have a lot of passion and excitement for their product. They have an active development strategy, and the BisTrack solution will continue to evolve."

Douwes himself has a lot of passion for the product. As cofounder of the BisTrack user forum, he shares his ideas and tips on reports, Smartviews, and other best practices with the user community. That spirit of collaboration has raised the competitiveness of the entire BisTrack user community.

Results with Epicor

- Stayed open during COVID-19 lockdown while competitors remained closed

- Converted delivery process to "Click & Collect" in less than 24 hours

- Ensured customer and employee safety through touchless applications

- Set new monthly online sales record of £1 million

Bradfords Building Supplies
Safely Serving Customers

Bradfords Building Supplies relied on BisTrack Dispatch and Delivery to help safely serve customers with collection pickup times during the pandemic.

Early in the pandemic, stores and yards were closed to keep staff and customers at a safe distance from each other. However, Bradfords did not react by closing their business entirely. Instead, they developed a way to continue serving customers during this time, following the guidelines for maintaining safe physical distance and controlling the overall capacity.

In just 24 hours, Bradfords adapted the BisTrack Dispatch and Delivery application, which they used for standard deliveries, to meet the need for a new, touchless "collect later" app they call Click & Collect. This unique application enabled them to do business in a safe manner, while most competitors were temporarily closed.

Pivoting to Meet Demand

Bradfords got creative and used a delivery time slot in BisTrack Journey Planner as a collection slot for each branch. Each branch determined the number of "collection" slots and pick up times that were safe for both staff and customers, based on branch size and staffing levels.

Customer collection information is printed out on their picking note, and Bradfords' yard staff is assigned picking for collections. Once the customer shows up at the allocated time, the "collect later" document is generated with all the order and customer information. The customer signs the paperwork, and Bradfords uses the BisTrack Dispatch and Delivery app to take a photograph of the signed paperwork—and then the goods and customer are on their way. Paperwork is never passed back and forth between Bradfords and customers. Instead, customers leave with the order and paperwork.

This process has removed the need to scan a document. The delivery app replaces the scanning function by taking a photo and automatically attaching it to the transaction as a related document. This enables employees and customers to remain at a safe distance from each other, and never have to pass paperwork back and forth.

> *"The BisTrack Delivery App, when used in conjunction with Journey Planner, gave us the flexibility to create a Click & Collect process within 24 hours. Bradfords was able to continue serving customers while maintaining social distancing, ensuring the safety of our customers and employees, whilst our competition had to remain initially closed."*
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> *Jonathan Chard, IT Director | Bradfords Building Supplies*

New Process Set up in 24 Hours to Respond to Covid

While their competitors remained closed for two months, Bradfords got employees on board quickly by sending training videos to 700 employees at more than 40 locations and converting a delivery pilot program into a timed collection-slot process. They were able to start serving customers within 24 hours. The process they created with BisTrack Dispatch and Delivery jumped them ahead of the curve and more importantly allowed them to stay open and to safely meet customer demands.

Overall, Bradfords online orders boomed during the Covid lockdown. In one particular month, sales exceeded £1M, a record high that nearly doubled the previous record. Their retail segment has grown with the rise in consumer interest in do-it-yourself home projects. While stores are open, Bradfords takes additional precautions in the yards, escorting customers to ensure the reduced customer and vehicle maximum capacity is adhered to for everyone's safety. All this was made possible by BisTrack Dispatch and Delivery and BisTrack Journey Planner applications.

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