

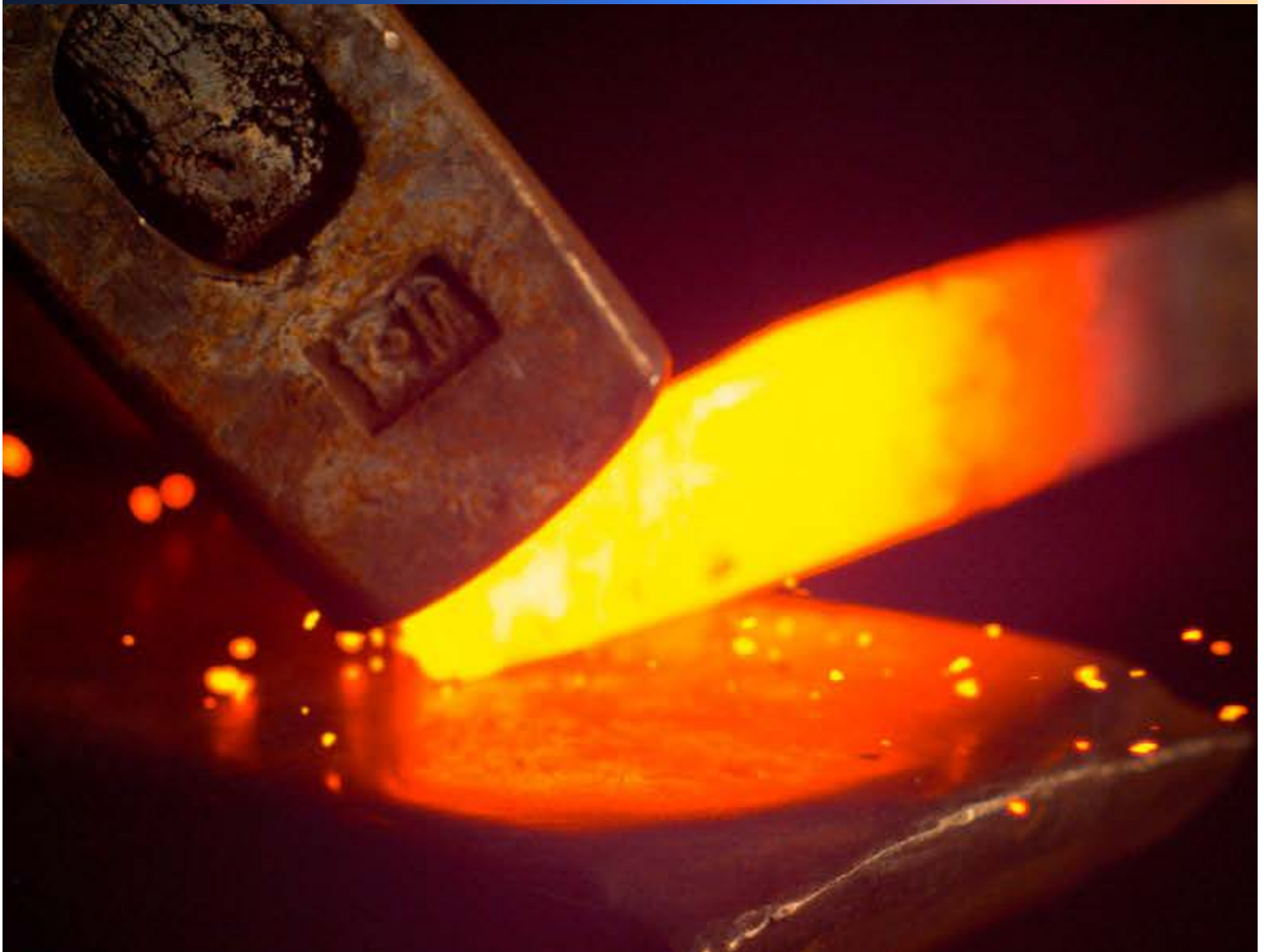
CASE STUDY



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logic

How a Family-Owned Metalworking Shop Outgrew Pen-and-Paper and Scaled With Confidence

Blacksmiths Depot transforms 300 years of tradition with Odoo ERP, integrating inventory, accounting, sales, ecommerce, and manufacturing across the US



About Blacksmiths Depot

Blacksmiths Depot (BSD) is a seller and manufacturer of blacksmithing, metalworking, and bladesmithing items. The company represents a 300-year family tradition of blacksmithing dating back to the Kayne family's roots in colonial America. Formally founded as "Steve Kayne Hand Forged Hardware" in 1965, Blacksmiths Depot now serves customers throughout the United States and beyond. The company is run by David Kayne (VP Operations), his mother Shirley, and his wife Cathy. David learned the craft starting at age six from his father, carrying forward the legacy of hand-forged excellence that defines the business.

300+

Years of Family
Blacksmithing Tradition

1965

Year Formally Founded
as Steve Kayne Hand
Forged Hardware

Multi- channel

Ecommerce + Roadshows +
Retail + Direct

At a Glance

Industry

**Blacksmithing & Metalworking
Manufacturing**

Headquarters

United States

Company Size

**Hammers, tongs, anvils, cutting
tools, smithing kits**

Methodologies

**Ledger pad → Excel →
QuickBooks (maxed out)**

Technology Optimized

Odo ERP

Engagement Type

**No real-time visibility;
old-fashioned inventory &
accounting methods**

The Challenge

Blacksmiths Depot had sustained its 300-year legacy on pen-and-paper bookkeeping and Excel spreadsheets. But as the company grew, the family realized they couldn't continue managing a multi-channel operation—ecommerce, roadshows, clinics, and retail—without real-time visibility into inventory and financials. QuickBooks had reached its limits. They needed a modern ERP system that wouldn't require the upfront capital of proprietary solutions.

Key Results

- + Real-time inventory visibility before customer calls
- + Integrated ecommerce with complete financial traceability
- + Multiple sales channels unified on one platform
- + COVID-19 resilience: ecommerce saved the business

The Challenge

For three centuries, the Kayne family had passed down the art of blacksmithing from generation to generation. But the business systems hadn't evolved with the times. Inventory was tracked on ledger pads. Accounting moved to spreadsheets. By the early 2000s, they adopted QuickBooks, which served them well—until it didn't.

As Blacksmiths Depot expanded beyond direct sales to include ecommerce, retail partnerships, and traveling clinics and roadshows, the gaps in their systems became impossible to ignore. There was no integration between sales channels and inventory. Point-of-sale systems didn't connect to accounting. Financial visibility was non-existent except once a year when the CPA ran the books at fiscal year-end. The family literally had no way to know week-to-week or month-to-month whether they were thriving or struggling.

More troublingly, they had no real-time view of what was in stock. Sales associates would quote lead times based on assumptions. Customers would call and wait days for an answer to simple questions: "Do you have this hammer in stock?" The answer required scrolling through spreadsheets and calling the workshop. It was inefficient, error-prone, and unworthy of a company steeped in craftsmanship and customer service.

Blacksmiths Depot needed a modern ERP system—but not the kind that would drain their family business with enterprise licensing costs. That's when Gray Matter Logic entered the picture.

Gray Matter Logic brings expertise in manufacturing, multi-channel sales, and family business operations—understanding both the technical requirements and the human challenge of digital transformation in established companies.



The Approach

David Kayne had watched his father and mother run the business with a craftsman's attention to detail. But he also understood that scaling a multi-channel operation required digital tools. "We had to figure out another solution because we needed something bigger," he recalls. "Gray Matter Logic contacted us, and the timing was right. We started with the inventory part and have been slowly adding on to it."

Gray Matter Logic recommended Odoo—an open-source ERP platform flexible enough to adapt to Blacksmiths Depot's unique business model. It could handle manufacturing workflows, multiple sales channels, ecommerce, point-of-sale, accounting, and inventory management all in one unified system. The cost was a fraction of traditional enterprise platforms, and the flexibility meant they could start with what mattered most—inventory control—and grow into additional modules as needs evolved.

OUR PROVEN FOUR-STEP INTEGRATION PROCESS



1. Analyze

See what others miss.

Met with David, Shirley, and Cathy to map the complete operation: manufacturing workflows, inventory across the workshop and warehouse, multiple sales channels (ecommerce, retail, roadshows, direct), and the current QuickBooks accounting system. Identified that inventory control was the critical first step.



2. Optimize

Strip away what doesn't serve you.

Designed a minimal-disruption implementation that started with inventory management—tracking products from manufacture through multiple sales channels with reorder points and stock visibility. Configured ecommerce integration so online orders flowed directly into the system. Set up portable POS for roadshows and clinics.



3. Automate

Let the system do the work.

Automated inventory movements, reorder notifications, cost tracking for manufactured items, and the flow of online orders into fulfillment. Connected ecommerce platform to the inventory and accounting backbone so every sale had complete financial traceability.



4. Transition

Walk into the new world prepared.

Rolled out inventory management first, then incrementally added accounting, sales, purchasing, and manufacturing modules. Provided training that emphasized how the system would solve the specific pain points David had articulated—knowing inventory before customer calls, understanding financial health week-to-week.

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DAVID KAYNE
VP OPERATIONS, BLACKSMITHS DEPOT

The implementation was deliberately phased. Rather than a "big bang" overhaul that would overwhelm a family operation, Gray Matter Logic started with inventory—the most painful problem. Once the team saw the value, adoption of additional modules followed naturally. "Nobody likes change," David reflects. "It's hard to get everyone on board because you have to get out of your comfort zone. Successful change comes from demonstrating everything with proof. When we show the program works, it helps facilitate change."

A critical success factor was connecting the ecommerce platform to the backend. Blacksmiths Depot had built an online store, but it operated as an island—sales didn't flow into inventory, and customer orders didn't connect to accounting. Odoo unified these systems. Now every online customer sees real inventory, places a real order, and receives a real invoice generated from the system of record.



The Results

Within weeks of implementation, Blacksmiths Depot gained real-time visibility into inventory across the workshop, warehouse, and sales channels. The family no longer needed to hunt through spreadsheets to answer customer questions about stock availability. More importantly, reorder points and purchasing alerts helped them maintain optimal inventory without overstock or stockouts.

Ecommerce sales now flowed seamlessly into inventory and accounting. Every online order was tracked from customer purchase through fulfillment to invoice, eliminating the manual data entry that used to consume hours each week. Multiple sales channels—ecommerce, retail partnerships, roadshows with portable POS, and direct sales—all reported into a single unified system.

Perhaps most significantly, David now had real-time financial visibility. Not just at fiscal year-end, but week-to-week and month-to-month. Gross margins, inventory valuation, sales performance by channel, tax liability by state and county—all accessible in dashboards and reports. The system also provided complete managerial accounting for the manufacturing side, showing true cost-to-make for each product.

“ We never knew one day to the next what we had or didn't have. And scrolling through everything to find what you're looking for was troublesome. Now, we can know before a customer calls what we have and what we need to order. ”

DAVID KAYNE
VP OPERATIONS, BLACKSMITHS DEPOT



Digital Transformation as Business Resilience

The value of Blacksmiths Depot's digital transformation was never more evident than during the COVID-19 crisis. With in-person roadshows, clinics, and retail partnerships suddenly impossible, the business faced an existential threat. But the ecommerce platform, now fully integrated with inventory and accounting, became a lifeline.

While many manufacturing and retail businesses scrambled to launch or salvage online operations, Blacksmiths Depot was already equipped. Orders flowed in. Inventory was tracked in real-time. Fulfillment was coordinated. Financial accounting was automatic. The digital infrastructure that had been built to scale the business also proved essential for survival.

“ Having our ecommerce site up and running was key for us. Without the internet, we would have been dead years ago. But with the recent COVID-19 crisis, the internet saved our business. ”

DAVID KAYNE
VP OPERATIONS, BLACKSMITHS DEPOT

The Human Side of Transformation

Bringing a family business into the digital age required more than just software. It required building confidence and demonstrating tangible value. David emphasizes this insight: "When we show the program works, it helps facilitate change." Rather than asking the team to trust promises, Gray Matter Logic delivered proof points—real reductions in search time for inventory, faster order processing, immediate answers to customer questions.

“ Gray Matter Logic staff were good to work with because of their experience. They understood what needed to be done as well as potential issues that might arise. Sometimes it's rocky, but now we have a better solution in place. ”

DAVID KAYNE
VP OPERATIONS, BLACKSMITHS DEPOT



About Gray Matter Logic

Gray Matter Logic gathers data and interprets the operational signals of a growing business. A fusion of human expertise and artificial intelligence applies meaning to those signals, revealing what's working, what's breaking, and what's changing. By forging connections between people, information, and workflows, Gray Matter Logic brings logic to complexity, transforming your business into a coordinated, fully functional system built for scale.

Ready to turn your complexity into clarity?

Book a free Complexity Audit.

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Request your free 60-minute systems assessment