



Ace Hardware of Appleton

Improving Inventory Accuracy with Mobile Technology

Company Facts

- Location: Appleton, Wisconsin
- Industry: HWHC
- Number of Stores: 1
- Website: www.appletonace.com
- Affiliation: Ace



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Ron Cox, Owner | Ace Hardware of Appleton

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Managing business when away from the store
- Ease of access to sales data
- Maintaining on-shelf inventory stock and order accuracy

Solution

- Epicor Eagle Mobile Manager

Benefits

- Access to the business—anytime, anywhere
- Improved customer service with instant inventory answers and decreased wait time
- Remote override with touch of a button

Ace Hardware of Appleton opened up shop in 1979 as a customer and neighborhood-oriented hardware business. Based in Appleton, Wisconsin, the company features a staff of over 225 combined years in retail operations and a total retail space of 14,000 square feet—including a rental department, hardware supplies, a large lawn and garden area, unique gifts and more.

Operating on Epicor Eagle since 2005, Ace Hardware of Appleton was excited to add the new Epicor Eagle Mobile Manager to their expanding business. “We are increasing our business-to-business relationships with the newly implemented B2B program, The Supply Place Powered by Ace Hardware, and wanted to shift our opportunities for growth,” said Ron Cox, owner of Ace Hardware of Appleton. “When we discovered the new Eagle Mobile Manager tool offered by Epicor, we knew this would be a great addition to our developing programs.”

Peace of mind with remote store monitoring

Quickly and easily accessing sales data, Cox can keep tabs on the business anywhere. “Typically, I use Mobile Manager on the days when I’m not in the store,” said Cox. “I check to see how the store is doing and keep track of what ‘life’ is bringing the store. For example, if I’m out of the store over holiday weekends, I’m able to review the data which gives me detailed information on what’s happening in the store and our total daily sales. It’s very, very useful. If all of a sudden I see a huge spike in sales and know that everybody is at lunch, it’s as easy as calling the store to get all hands-on deck.”

Prior to using Epicor Eagle Mobile Manager, Cox would have to take a computer with him to review daily business activity. "It was very time-consuming," said Cox. "I would have to get the computer all booted up, access the secure VPN, and then at that point I would have full access to check on the business. Now I can sit down in a restaurant, pull out my smartphone or tablet, select the Mobile Manager app and in five seconds I have complete access to sales data and store information."

"Mobile Manager empowers our business to have the information that we need, even before we know we need it," said Cox. "It's one of those tools I look forward to watching grow with us as time goes on and our business expands."

Keeping shelves stocked and customers happy with fewer footsteps

As a business centered on its customers' experience, Ace Hardware of Appleton has enhanced customer service by using price check, inventory functionality, and account override features with Mobile Manager. "Checking quantity on hand has been a real turning point for our store," said Cox. "In the past we would walk around the store and assume that empty shelves had been checked and that the products were on order—then you'd do a price check and find out the product is sitting in the back room. Now, with Mobile Manager we are able to check an item and verify quantity at the same time so we don't have to go get the RF gun to check quantity or walk over to a computer. I simply type the item number into my smartphone using Mobile Manager and at the touch of a finger I know if we have more stock to be placed on the shelves. It saves us countless footsteps and keeps our customers happy when our shelves are stocked with the products they need."

The remote override feature is another customer service improvement Cox and the management team is taking advantage of with Mobile Manager. "One of our managers uses remote override on every shift he manages," said Cox. "This feature saves management and customers a great deal of time—customers aren't waiting for management to make a trip up to the registers and management can complete the transaction from anywhere in the store. This is business-changing—you have your store data right in your hands."

An additional aspect of Mobile Manager that Ace Hardware of Appleton uses is the mobile inventory functionality. "If I'm reviewing stock outside or around the store, I can scan any product to make sure that it's priced right, and that we have plenty of it in the backroom," said Cox. "Before Mobile Manager, I'd have to write down the item number and then get that information to the right person to have them research the product to find out what's going on with it. Being able to look that information up instantaneously is a big timesaver and performance driver for our staff."

Knowing where the competition falls

Mobile Manager delivers valuable information to Ace Hardware of Appleton when it comes to comparing product prices at other similar retailers. "When I visit other retailers I like to do comparison shopping to see where our prices fall on certain items compared to theirs," said Cox. "It's one of those routines that I am really beginning to appreciate. I price shop to make sure that we are not only in line with our competitors, but also to verify our prices are within reason for our customers. With Mobile Manager, the process is so easy, I just scan the item and it's instantly compared to ours. I no longer need to write down SKUs to research when I get back into our store—it's all done on the spot."

"If another retailer were to ask about our use of Mobile Manager, I would tell them go for it," said Cox. "I've been very pleased with our purchase and it's a beneficial tool for any retailer."

About Epicor

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