



Conwell Enterprises Accesses Store Data Anywhere, Improves Turns, and Reduces Stockouts

Company Facts

- Location: Provincetown, Massachusetts
- Industry: Hardware, LBM
- Number of Locations: 1
- Web site: www.conwelllumber.com
- Affiliation: Ace Hardware

“By slightly adjusting my rounding rules with Epicor Pricing Planner, I gained an additional \$65,000 in margin in the first year.”

Jeff Rogers, President | Conwell Enterprises

Conwell Enterprises is a family-owned hardware and building materials store in Provincetown, Massachusetts. With several profit centers inside the store, the business appeals to the diverse needs of the community. A Radio Shack area provides consumer electronics, while the art department is the art store in Provincetown. Conwell's also offers pet supplies, installs custom blinds, runs an electrical and plumbing wholesaling unit, as well as supplies paper goods to local guest houses and restaurants. Supporting a seasonal resort town, which transforms from a rural town into a big city during the summer, makes it challenging to maintain adequate stock. Conwell's relies on Epicor Eagle to manage its inventory, pricing, and more.

Better access to key data

Even with Epicor Eagle viewers and reports, it was difficult for Conwell's managers to find time to sit down and analyze store data. Now, key performance indicators can be looked up at any time, day or night, using Epicor Eagle Mobile Manager. “I can't live without Epicor Mobile Manager,” said Jeff Rogers, president of Conwell Enterprises. “Even when I'm not in the store, I can look at current total sales, last year's sales on the same day, popular items, and customer accounts.”

The flexibility to view information at any time has been invaluable to Conwell's. “I can scan an item and see the item's selling history or find out how many we have on hand,” said Rogers. “It's almost like having an RF scanner with you all the time. Access to data keeps me in the loop on how the business is doing.”

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Managing the business while away from the store
- Making informed purchasing decisions at buying shows
- Performing price changes that maximize margin
- Meeting inventory demands of a highly seasonal business

Solution

- Epicor Eagle®
- Epicor Mobile Manager
- Epicor Pricing Planner
- Epicor Inventory Planner
- Epicor Performance Manager

Benefits

- Manage the store with a smartphone from anywhere with access to sales, inventory, and customer data
- Improve margins from calculated price adjustments
- Reduce stock outs from increased accuracy of suggested order points

Rogers also keeps tabs on the business while attending buying shows. “Recently I was gone for two weeks at the Ace and Radio Shack shows,” said Rogers. “While away, I could use Epicor Mobile Manager to check the store’s sales multiple times a day while walking around the show floor. It helped me make better buying decisions. Before, I used to carry around a printed report, which worked except when I wanted an item not included on the report. Then, I’d have to remotely access the Epicor Eagle system when I returned to my room or I’d have to call the store. With Epicor Mobile Manager, I have the flexibility to look up items immediately, which saves me time and enables me to be more accurate. I know how much of every item I’m buying and selling, so I don’t overbuy.”

Epicor Mobile Manager is also instrumental in catching low quantity-on-hand items. “Using Epicor Mobile Manager to verify quantities, I go through our orders on Monday after placing an RSO order,” said Rogers. “If I discover we are out-of-stock of an item, I can still have it delivered on the Wednesday truck instead of waiting until Friday. I’m able to catch our potentially out-of-stock instances faster.”

Staying connected is essential for Rogers and the Conwell Enterprises management team. “I can’t imagine being without access to current store information 24/7, I have so much more freedom now,” said Rogers. “I can go out to lunch with my wife or go on vacation because I can stay connected. Using Epicor Mobile Manager is a no-brainer. You shouldn’t run your business without it.”

More responsive order point adjustments

Rogers struggled to keep adequate quantities on-hand when using the third-party software, Inventory Master. “When Inventory Master came out it was cutting edge, but the seasonality of our business proved challenging for that tool,” said Rogers. “We were experiencing a lot of stockouts. This first busy season with Epicor Eagle Inventory Planner, we were out-of-stock less often than previous seasons, and our inventory turns are up at least a point. For instance, an A item had an order point of four units under the old system and we constantly ran out. Under that same instance, Epicor Inventory Planner suggests we should have eight units in stock. Now we remain in stock and don’t lose sales or disappoint our customers. Epicor Inventory Planner has adapted more quickly to the changing fall season, too. Order points are coming down much faster, which

will keep us from being overstocked. For our business, it’s critical to be able to rapidly respond to these seasonal changes. Epicor Inventory Planner is a crucial tool.”

Faster pricing updates and maximized margins

Updating prices used to be time consuming at Conwell’s. Roger’s computer would be taxed, and it would take hours to update using the third-party software Margin Master. “I don’t have any real complaints about Margin Master, but it was built to overlay our system,” said Rogers. “We had to export and import price changes, which took a long time. With Epicor Pricing Planner, I click a button, and the prices are updated immediately, no uploading required. I can perform changes during the middle of the day, right away. It’s fast and seamless.”

Conwell’s uses the what-if analysis capabilities of Epicor Pricing Planner to see how price changes can affect sales volume. “It’s important to make logical and informed decisions when you set pricing,” said Rogers. “Price changes come out all the time from Ace. If you don’t have a tool to forecast what your particular market can tolerate, you could be losing out on thousands of dollars in margin. I use the what-if analysis constantly and base my decisions on what will happen. I always run what-if scenarios to ensure we maximize our margin. By slightly adjusting my rounding rules with Epicor Pricing Planner I gained an additional \$65,000 in margin in the first year.”

About Epicor

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