



Epicor Success Story

Empire Plumbing Supply

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
- ▶ Industry: Plumbing
- ▶ Number of Employees: 24
- ▶ Web site: www.epsupply.com

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Support high-performance processes and procedures for a data-driven, relationship-based plumbing distribution business

Solution

- ▶ Epicor Eclipse

Benefits

- ▶ Standard operating procedures aligned with the ERP system
- ▶ Support for eCommerce
- ▶ Reports that are available in real time
- ▶ Real-time tracking of deliveries



Empire Plumbing Supply of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, is a well-established distributor with 24 employees and \$15 million in annual revenues. Founded in 1961, the company has always been family owned—most recently under President Sam Beakey, who purchased it in 2000.

In a key strategic initiative to improve business performance, Empire Plumbing Supply went live on the Epicor Eclipse enterprise resource planning (ERP) system in April 2013.

Selection and implementation

According to CEO Ken Johns, Empire Plumbing Supply's previous system had no built-in upgrades, requiring significant changes and investment for each new release, and so the distributor had never purchased any of these after initially implementing in 2001. "The old system was not user-friendly in this respect," says Johns. "It was critical that we transition from our antiquated servers."

Johns joined Empire Plumbing Supply on November 1, 2012, and signed for Epicor Eclipse one week later. "We knew we needed a new system, plus we wanted to put standard operating procedures in place—and these came with Eclipse," he explains. "To have these procedures written out and available for training would be unusual for a company of our size. When we looked



through those that were pre-packaged and aligned with Eclipse, they went above and beyond the competition.”

Before selecting the system, Empire conducted its own market research, contacting long-time Epicor Eclipse customers in the plumbing and electrical industries, including Broken Arrow Electric and Cregger Company Inc., a member of WIT & Co. (a member-owned buying group of independent plumbing, heating and cooling distributors from across the country).

According to Johns, “We learned that Eclipse was the most widely deployed system among the WIT members, and both of the customers we talked to said they loved it. That was good enough for us!”

The implementation confirmed that they had made the right choice. “We have no full-time IT staff, so the mapping and extraction of data was handled by Eclipse consultants,” says Johns. “The support was excellent; they handled all issues superbly. Anybody can sell servers and turn them on, but bringing over data from the old system is key. We had no glitches or surprises with that; it was phenomenal.”

User-friendliness and reporting capabilities

Johns believes that Epicor Eclipse has helped to reinvent Empire Plumbing Supply. “Some employees were skeptical or resistant to the change, but once the new system was up and running, they began to see the improvements,” he recalls. “Within a month or so of implementation, they were saying, ‘This is so much better than what we had before!’ We’ve also been able to restructure a lot of our positions; it would take many more employees to handle what we’re doing, if we did not have Eclipse.”

In addition, Johns praises the comprehensive reporting capabilities of the system. “It’s changed the way we look at our business,” he says. “For example, we can access comparative

data for reviews of sales productivity in real time. It’s easy to run and requires no special technical knowledge to use.”

Companion products add value

According to Johns, several companion products provided additional reasons for Empire to go with Eclipse. “These showed a higher level of sophistication than other systems, and offered capabilities even beyond what we needed,” he states.

The eCommerce functionality of Epicor Eclipse is not just a storefront, but is fully integrated and interactive with the ERP, including customer logins, purchase history, price matrices, and so on. Observes Johns, “This is a relationship-based business, and we can reach maintenance staff engineers and other customer targets if we make it interactive for them. We felt this was a tremendous deal.”

Empire is also seeing value from the Proof of Delivery application for Eclipse. Proof of Delivery enables drivers to view daily route information and maps, and access driving instructions from their cell phone. Johns calls it “very cool” and states, “It works better than GPS for our drivers, facilitating our long-distance deliveries throughout Oklahoma, into Arkansas, and beyond. And we can see where the drivers are, right at that second.”

Supporting excellence with data

Concludes Johns, “We aspire to excel; to do that, you must have quality people working in an A-level culture. Distribution is becoming so specialized—with all of the nuances of discounts, returns and other aspects of the business—that there is an overarching demand for data. We knew that with a great data system and great people, we could create the culture of a high-performing company. Without the data that comes from Eclipse, we would not have the capability to achieve this. And we will continue to create more efficient internal procedures based on the empirical knowledge we gain.”



About Epicor

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