



CONFIGURE ONE

Creating a competitive edge by empowering dealers with quoting and ordering available 24/7

Case Study

Niehaus: Wholesale Building Materials

When the Wholesale Building Materials (WBM) division of Niehaus Companies switched to a new ERP system, they needed to replace the product configurator component they were using from their old ERP system. They were looking to upgrade to a more fully-featured CPQ solution and they found the right fit with Configure One.

After implementing Configure One in 2009, WBM was able to streamline their quote-to-order process by empowering their dealer network. Configure One allowed them to reallocate internal sales staff from administrative duties and let them focus on sales and customer service. Their new setup allowed dealers to conduct business 24/7 and enabled the division to continue expanding in the midst of a recession.



Niehaus Companies, Inc. currently operates 11 separate businesses within the building materials industry. The Wholesale Building Materials (WBM) division distributes quality building materials throughout five states; Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.



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Brian Kirwer
Marketing Director
Niehaus Companies

Search for a New System

As a result of changing its ERP system, Niehaus’ WBM division needed to find a new product configurator and quotation solution. The company was looking for an enterprise CPQ solution with a flexible framework.

A key criterion was the ability to fully integrate with our ERP system, which excluded a lot of vendors. They also wanted the ability to customize the look and feel of the application without relying on the software provider.

The WBM division’s first stop was to evaluate the CPQ used by their business associates at Therma Tru doors. “We started testing Therma Tru’s configurator and there were a lot of things that we didn’t like,” said Brian Kirwer, Marketing Director.

“We didn’t want to rely on an outside company to create the configuration rules,” said David Niehaus, Vice President. “We wanted to be able to customize the product to meet our specific needs.”

The Right Fit

After a comprehensive evaluation, the WBM division selected Configure One’s CPQ solution. “Configure One provided the best overall value for us. It’s a great product with great functionality. Configure One has experienced staff who were always available to answer questions,” Kirwer explained.

“They also provided additional modules that allowed us to grow with the software as we expanded as a company,” said Kirwer. “Configure One continues to evolve and innovate with new releases, and is always developing new functionality.”



“Configure One has streamlined the entire quote-to-order process.”

David Niehaus
Vice President
Niehaus Companies

Niehaus echoed his colleague's comments. “Configure One provided the functionality we needed and the value we were seeking. There were other systems that were cheaper, but didn't have the functionality we needed. In the end, it was the right fit for the right price.”

Open for Business

The WBM division went live with Configure One in 2009. “The admin and setup tools were really easy to use,” said Kirwer. “Since then we have called Configure One for support, but other than that, we've been self-sufficient.”

The streamlined quote-to-order process has made the company a lot more efficient. Using Configure One, they've been able to provide quoting and ordering around-the-clock for customers that include independent lumberyards, home centers, and builders.

“Home centers do a lot of their business on weekends. Many times, our customers needed a quote and to order a door when we were not open. With Configure One, our customers can configure a door, produce a quote, and place an order 24/7,” said Kirwer.

ERP Integration

The WBM division uses an ERP system acquired from Spruce Computers, which is very specific to its industry. It is designed for lumber, hardware and building materials dealers. To automate and streamline as much as the quote-to-order process as possible, Configure One had to integrate with WBM's ERP system.

“We used Configure One Connect, Configure One's integration module,” said Kirwer. “In addition to generating a quote and sales order, Configure One also creates a smart part number and BOM. A single door may contain 35 separate items. That data is passed to our ERP system to relieve inventory for the individual components.”

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Brian Kirwer
Marketing Director
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Benefits

Since implementing Configure One in 2009, the company has seen continued growth, even in the midst of a down market. Without increasing their internal staff, they’ve been able to expand their sales force using dealers, which now create 40 percent of all configurations and 25 percent of sales orders.

The result is that the WBM inside sales team is not just answering calls, they can now focus on other activities, like making outbound calls. “We definitely operate more efficiently,” said Niehaus. “Configure One has streamlined the entire quote-to-order process.”

The WBM division has continued to grow even in a down market. “During the past few years, our business has grown even with less than optimal market conditions,” said Kirwer. “Configure One has made us more competitive because we now operate 24/7.”

Configure One is a leading provider of web-based product configurator and CPQ (configure price quote) software. Configure One has enabled both large and small companies to increase revenues and decrease costs by automating the way they sell and process orders for configurable, multi-option, and customizable products.

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