



# Locksmith Software

## Case Study

L & S Security Hardware  
Prepared by Blue Link ERP

**“Blue Link Elite enables the business to work smoothly, and to be able to expand over the next few years, without having to consider any other packages. The webinars provided by Blue Link are extremely useful, and can be viewed many times, at different non-stress times. Employees really appreciate that they can watch the webinars anytime they want to – and can get answers to questions as they need them – and can go back and check again if the answer wasn’t clear the first time.”**

**Robert Kranjec, L&S Security Hardware**

# Situation

Locksmiths & Safemen Security Hardware Ltd. (alternate name: L & S Security Hardware) is a family-owned locksmith company, headed by Robert Kranjec. Established in 1970 by Robert's father, located in Brampton, Ontario, the company incorporated in 1978, and the first Toronto location was established in 1980; a hardware store was opened in 1982, and sold in 1998. Currently, Head Office is in Brampton, with one location in Toronto, Canada.

Locksmith services (in retail, wholesale, and installation) include lock sales and service; CCTV sales and service; padlocks; door-closers; card access systems; Handicap door operators, panic hardware; exit devices; and high-security locks. Total sales are in the range of \$1million – 5 million, with export sales between \$100,000 and 200,000. Locksmiths & Safemen Security Hardware Ltd. has 14 employees.



# Challenge

L & S Security Hardware has a large inventory of parts. Inventory controls include item numbering for tracking keys, and using colour coding. The colour coding, used in addition to the numbering system, allows for a large amount of locks to be inventoried without using long, complicated numbers, which might lead to error. For example, one lock may be numbered as 100 (100); another lock can also be numbered 100, but is colour coded satin chrome (100SC); a third key can use the number 100 but is colour coded polished brass (100PB).

The company operates seven service trucks.

Major projects include locksmith services for high rise buildings, conversions (for example, a recent one was a 440 suite building, which needed reinforced door plates, new locks etc.), and work at major hotels such as Delta Hotels, a Canadian hotel chain, and the Deerhurst Resort, Ontario's largest all-season luxury family, golf, spa and conference resort, just north of Toronto. This work entails detailed tracking of inventory for each project.



In addition, Robert Kranjec frequently flies to the USA to oversee the computer integration for electronic door entry systems. Typically used in hotels, and high-security buildings, these electronic door lock systems receive input from a user via, for example, an electronic badge or an electronic key. The badge/key is usually inserted into an electronic receiving device. The electronic receiving device is connected to a central computer which is part of the electronic door lock system. The central computer tracks when a user provides the correct input for access. The entire service process is inventory intensive and uses six workstation computers, 1 POS terminal in Brampton, and two workstation computers, 1 POS terminal in Toronto.

L & S Security Hardware originally had an IBM 'clone' computer. The system was used by L & S Security Hardware for 15 years. By 1996/7, the system was becoming cumbersome and unmanageable, with many features unusable; new features were also becoming necessary, such as Point of Sale (POS) software. Robert Kranjec had recently completed a network upgrade – he is computer knowledgeable – and was aware of the increasing shortcomings of the current system and a need for better inventory management.





# Solution

Robert Kranjec decided to investigate new accounting and business management packages, including possible upgrades, or an entire new system.

A Microsoft seminar offered the opportunity to check out solutions, including:

A low-cost accounting program for small business, with payroll functions, reports, analysis, program help, and transaction processing. It was rejected as not powerful enough for the company's needs.

Blue Link ERP – an integrated accounting, business management, and inventory management software solution. Blue Link uses Microsoft SQL-Server for the back-end database, and scales from single-user to dozens of concurrent users, and handles large transaction volumes. At the time, this solution seemed to have more options than the company needed – a decision which Robert later regretted.

Robert decided to purchase an alternative package, with software based on Microsoft Access, and as he still needed POS software, he also bought a complementary software solution.

However, many features that were originally promised were not forthcoming, and in addition to system problems, and lack of support, there was a change in service provider, and then the provider went out of business.

Finally, in late 2005, Mr. Kranjec re-visited the Blue Link solution. As he investigated all the options available, Mr. Kranjec decided Blue Link's ERP inventory system was the best solution for his company. He migrated his company system to Blue Link ERP in February 2005.



# Results

Blue Link ERP had the features he needed, and “although at the upper limit of the price range, looked good.” Blue Link ERP uses Microsoft SQL-Server for the back-end database, and scales from single-user to dozens of concurrent users, and handles large transaction volumes.

Mr. Kranjec was also positively influenced by the experiences of companies with similar software requirements: such as one customer which focuses on providing architectural hardware, locksmith, and security markets with electric locks, door hardware and access control products; and another which distributes food processing equipment and supplies, provides a knife sharpening service, and operates a retail outlet and showroom.

For L & S Security Hardware, the Blue Link feature of being fully compatible with Microsoft was essential, as it meant the company was guaranteed to be able to safely migrate years of accumulated archives. And the promise of future versions of Blue Link ERP allowing colour coding in inventory was also a big plus, allowing further detailed control of inventory. Blue Link also provides the Point of Sale, service order software, dispatch, and inventory control required by L & S Security Hardware, along with other important features such as integration with Outlook, and customizable reports.

## Installation and Training:

Mr. Kranjec is pleased that Blue Link support was readily available throughout the installation process. Despite some initial problems with the Point of Sale and virtual private network (VPN) hookups, he says, “Blue Link worked hard with me, and we finally got the older drivers to work”. Mr. Kranjec says that when he requires support, it is always available.

The employees have taken easily to the new software, finding it simple to work with, and they value the order dispatch, sales order, and review screens. The number of report variations is appreciated, as is the ability to customize and to use the reports with Excel. Kranjec adds, “The Accounting Department still tends to verify some of the Blue Link calculations in-house with Excel – but is finding that Blue Link is invariably right.” He sees that the counter-checking is getting less frequent as the staff comes to trust and rely on the Blue Link software.





In conclusion, because of its inventory intensive operations, L & S Security Hardware makes constant use of the inventory control features of Blue Link ERP, and finds them “very powerful; and the Contact Manager software is really good too.” Blue Link’s close involvement with all aspects of the conversion leads Kranjec to believe that previous problems with year-end migration of accounts won’t happen in 2007.



Overall, Kranjec says that there are still “lots of features we haven’t got around to using,” mostly because of time and work pressures. But, he adds that “the webinars provided by Blue Link are extremely useful, and can be viewed many times at different non-stress times. Employees really appreciate that they can watch the webinars anytime they want to – and can get answers to questions as they need them – and can go back and check again if the answer wasn’t clear the first time.”

He sees Blue Link ERP as providing all the software programs that his company needs – now, and into the future. Blue Link “enables the business to work smoothly, and to be able to expand over the next few years, without having to consider any other packages.”

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