FOODSERVICE EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY SOFTWARE CASE STUDY
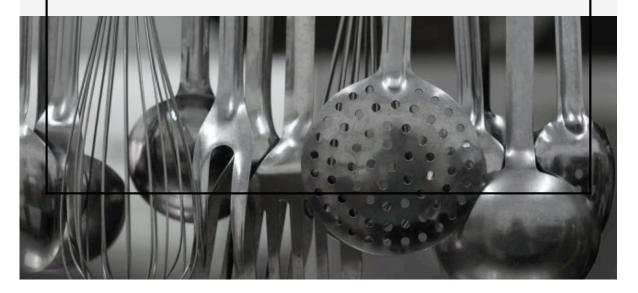
Nella Cutlery

SITUATION

Nella Cutlery Toronto Inc. distributes food processing equipment and supplies, provides a knife sharpening service, and operates a retail outlet and showroom. Separate systems were in place to manage the various parts of the business – some manual, some automated but disconnected.
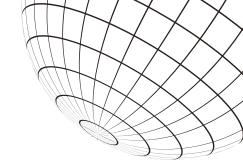
Nella Cutlery was founded in 1952 and has been serving the Food Industry since then. Nella distributes a full line of food processing equipment and supplies used in supermarkets, delicatessens, convenience stores, restaurants, meat purveyors and in any other establishment dealing with food products. Nella provides service and repair on equipment supplied, and also delivers a unique Professional Knife Sharpening Service, which provides chefs and cooks with sharp replacement knives delivered and exchanged on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. In addition, Nella operates a retail outlet and a large showroom.

"Nella is significantly more efficient since the implementation of Blue Link ERP, and the benefits certainly more than justify the investment made in the solution."

Wendy Kippen
Accountant & Office Manager, Nella Cutlery

CHALLENGE

As the business expanded, a number of systems were employed to manage discrete parts of the operation. A DOS-based invoicing package was used to manage billing for sales of equipment and supplies. A separate route management system was introduced for scheduling and billing the knife sharpening service, and also tracked all receivables. Service and repair activities were tracked manually on paper and invoiced using Excel spreadsheets.

At the back end, a popular DOS-based accounting software handled basic accounting and accounts payable. In the absence of integration between these systems, Nella performed a significant amount of duplicate data entry, and had to manually combine reports from the distinct systems in order to evaluate company performance.

Nella wanted a system that would remove the need for duplicate data entry, and would provide quick, easy and accurate access to key business information such as sales history, customer service and financial information.

THE PROBLEM
- Multiple Systems
- Lack of Integration
- Duplicate Data Entry

LOOKING FOR
- Combined access to sales history, customer service and financial information

Wendy Kippen of Nella says, "The detail level that is available with the drill down feature is a huge benefit. Previously, we did not have the access to the inventory on an invoice, so we did not know what we were trying to collect without going to pull out the paper copy of the invoice. Now we simply drill down and reproduce the invoice on screen, while making the collection call."

Wendy also cites the ability to produce a statement at any time of the month as a benefit.

SOLUTION

Nella looked at several possible solutions. The need for different types of invoicing for wholesales sales, retail, services and knife sharpening complicated the selection process. A dedicated service repair system was considered, but the lack of integration was a deterrent, and the cost of this package combined with separate upgraded accounting software was also a factor.

Nella decided on Blue Link ERP as the software solution that could deliver on all their needs, within budget. The Route Management System was retained for knife sharpening, but Blue Link built integration between the systems at a detailed transaction level.

The Blue Link service repair software was configured to handle the service and repair activities, totally replacing the combined manual and spreadsheet system that had previously been used. The order entry, invoicing, receivables and general accounting system are all under one solution.

The retail store (in a location remote from head office) is now online using the Blue Link's wholesale POS (point-of-sale) system component, hosted at Nella and accessed via the Internet.

Comprehensive customer billing history for all levels of the business is now stored in one central place.

RESULTS

Nella implemented Blue Link ERP to manage all but one of the business functions, integrated with 3rd party software for the remaining function. The implementation has been successful in achieving Nella's objectives of streamlining time-consuming business processes and providing accurate and timely information to management and staff.

Benefits of the implementation of Blue Link include:

Streamlining of the Sales Process
Nella now processes orders and invoices through a fast, user-friendly interface, saving time and improving the qualitative interaction with customers. "Thanks to Blue Link ERP, we are able to give customers all the information required to expedite their order," says Ralph.

Elimination of Duplicate Entry
The time savings realized by eliminating duplicate entry, manual tracking and invoicing, and maintaining separate systems is estimated at several person-days every month. Beyond that, the potential for key-punch errors on transferring data between systems is completely eliminated.

Reduced Administration Time and Delays
The ability to quickly recall previous transactions to the screen saves the staff at Nella several hours every week. Information lookups that used to take minutes or, in some cases, hours, now take mere seconds, including:

- Faster response time in searching customer files, and
- Searches for different items that are available in all the modules, like payments recorded per day and inventory items by customer.

Improved Control Over Receivables and Cash Flow
The receivables collection process is easier and more effective because all data necessary to complete a collection call is available in real time.

BLUE LINK ERP

Additional Benefits Identified by Nella's Staff
- More than one user able to do the same activity at one time (order entry, record payment).
- The data entry by code or name reduces the scope for user errors.
- Security is higher with a password protection to different levels in different modules.
- Exporting reports to Excel to be able to fine-tune them as needed.
- Technical support is easy to access. Someone is always available.

In summing up, Wendy Kippen states that "Nella is significantly more efficient since the implementation of Blue Link ERP, and the benefits certainly more than justify the investment made in the solution."

BLUE ◆◆ LINK

With Blue Link ERP Software, you will be able to:

✓ **Grow your business** with advanced functionality and an all-in-one solution
✓ **Decrease costs** with better inventory management
✓ **Save time and automate processes** across all business operations

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