



Customer Success Story

Read how Blue Link ERP helped Creager Mercantile automate the calculation of Tobacco tax, manage mix and match inventory quantity pricing and better serve customers with mobile sales tools.



Creager Mercantile – At a Glance

Creager Mercantile is a wholesale grocery distributor located in Denver, Colorado providing customers nationwide access to a variety of products including beverages, candy, grocery, Mexican candy and products, vaporizers, tobacco, automotive products, gift shop supply and more.

<https://creagermerc.com/>

The best in convenience



Situation

Established in 1958, Creager Mercantile is a locally owned and family operated business. With a focus on customer service, Creager provides a wide variety of wholesale convenience and grocery products to customers in the Denver metro and Colorado area.

Challenge

As a growing business, Creager was stuck trying to automate processes and reduce manual work. The company's existing software was supported by a single individual, making it difficult to get work done and receive the support required. In addition, Creager was struggling to manage its warehouse operations and adhere to government requirements around selling Tobacco products. Lots of time was spent at the company on manual processes instead of on growing the business.

“We have increased online orders and sales orders (orders via phone and email) by 50% because we now have the ability with Blue Link to track them.”
- Zach Taylor

Solution

The solution for Creager Mercantile was to work with Blue Link ERP as its trusted technology partner and ERP software - not only to address existing inefficiencies, but to also provide new opportunities for company growth and automation.

Result

As a result of implementing Blue Link, Creager was able to increase the number of online orders and sales orders (phone and email) by 50%, become more accurate and efficient with managing inventory in its warehouse, significantly decrease the amount of time processing tax accruals and further automate processes across the company.

Situation

In business since 1958, Creager Mercantile is a wholesale supplier and one-stop-shop for everything beverage, candy, Mexican candy, grocery, Mexican products, vaporizers, tobacco, automotive products, gift shop supply and more. Located in Denver, Colorado, Creager serves customers nationwide and stocks thousands of items from top sellers to hard-to-find items. Unlike traditional big-box stores, Creager carries a much wider variety of wholesale products to better serve its customers. As a small business locally owned and operated, Creager prides itself on its customer service and giving back to the community by participating in special projects.



“Welcome to Creager Business Depot. My goal is to provide you with “The Best in Convenience.” What does this mean? It means you can find the products here that you need to service your clientele, receive outstanding customer service and shopping options, and benefit from great pricing so your business can thrive.”

- **Chip Creager**

Owner of Creager Business Depot



Challenge

As a growing business Creager was challenged with the management of over 4500 inventory items, some of which are very similar. Historically, managing this inventory in the warehouse led to a high number of picking errors and customers receiving invoices for the wrong items. In addition, employees were continuously having to manually look up items in the company’s BSE system because the items would not scan properly at the check-out counters. For Creager, the average order dollar value was around \$400 and depending on the mix of products, could include anywhere from 30-100 items. If any of these items did not scan properly at the check-out counter it could add up to 2 minutes per item as employees tried to find the right code. For larger orders, this extra 2 minutes would add up quickly, slowing down the entire process.

Another challenge for Creager was around managing Tobacco tax. Tobacco is the most scrutinized product that Creager Mercantile carries. In Colorado, there is a 40% Other Tobacco Product tax (OTP) which includes cigars, smokeless items, and a variety of different products. As a business carrying these inventory items, Creager is responsible for calculating and recording its OTP tax properly and making sure that the company reports the proper taxes to the government.

Prior to using Blue Link, Creager would manually calculate the OTP tax based off of the invoice from vendors, trying to ensure that the inventory cost and corresponding tax amounts were correct. As this was a manual process, it was prone to human error which led to wasted time and resources trying to identify and then manually fix any discrepancies.

Another challenge for Creager was around the picking, packing and shipping process which was inefficient and unorganized. Trying to process a simple sales order could take up to 20 minutes. Since Creager Mercantile does not operate as a traditional distributor, the warehouse was not set-up for efficient picking, but rather for customers to shop while onsite cash-and-carry style. This meant that when an employee needed to pick an order, the location of any given product in the warehouse was unclear, meaning the picker would waste time trying to locate items for the order.

Challenges:



Solution

As Creager became more and more frustrated with its existing software solution and manual processes, the company decided to start searching for alternatives. Among other issues, the company's existing BSE software did not have robust reporting functionality and was slow and expensive. The system was supported by a single individual leading to delays and frustrations. This led Creager to start the search for a new software solution and ultimately led to the implementation of Blue Link ERP.

To start the search process, Creager reached out to the company SoftwareAdvice.com which then recommended Blue Link ERP as well as 4 other different software solutions as a potential good fit. After initial sales calls, Creager became frustrated with its interactions with the recommended vendors – most of whom were in a huge rush to demo the software and were being extremely pushy about the sale. Blue Link ERP, however, was able to stand out from the competition with its consultative sales approach.

“When we talked with Blue Link, we worked with Mark Canes and we loved the fact that he was patient. He was more concerned with seeing if Creager and Blue Link would be a good partnership than getting money out of us.” – **Zach Taylor**

After in-depth discussions with Blue Link, it was determined that the software would be a good fit from a functionality and budget standpoint. To close the deal, Zach and another member of the Creager team decided to make the trip to Toronto to meet Mark and the Blue Link team face-to-face.

“And low and behold, Blue Link was just like us. A small business that prides itself on customer service and relationships. We went to Toronto and met almost everyone on the Blue Link Staff and Mark took us to a few customers to get feedback about Blue Link. The customers and Mark were very transparent and honest with us and very friendly. After visiting Blue Link, we knew that this was going to be a great partnership.” – **Zach Taylor**

Results

Working as its trusted technology partner, Blue Link ERP has helped Creager increase sales orders, customer satisfaction and company growth. Blue Link has made it easy to analyze data from different sources and has provided Creager with robust ERP functionality to automate processes and reduce manual work.

OTP Tax

When it comes to managing OTP tax, Blue Link ERP's accounting functionality ensures accruals are accurately tracked and added to inventory costs/items in a way that is simple for employees to do and understand. Blue Link users just need to check a box for specific inventory items where the OTP tax applies, and the system automatically calculates the amount. It now takes the company less than 5 seconds to make sure that proper inventory items have the right tax accrued.

Mobile Sales

Creager implemented Blue Link's mobile point-of-sale app and B2B online order portal. The mobile app allows Creager's delivery drivers to take and process orders while onsite with customers, and the B2B online order portal provides customers with access to ordering and account information 24/7/365. Both tools have helped the company increase the number of sales orders 50% from before using Blue Link to now. Better warehouse management has made the order pulling and shipping process more efficient leading to almost 100% accuracy with invoices.

Customization

Through customization, Blue Link provided Creager with the ability to setup and automate mix and match quantity deals. Prior to Blue Link, Creager had to manually change the price on all items associated with a mix and match deal. Working with Blue Link to create a custom spec, Creager can now click a button in the system to change the price of mix and match items – this feature alone has increased the company's beverage sales by at least 50%.

Reporting

Reporting with Blue Link has been simplified and automated. Creager is able to easily open Excel sheets that are live linked to Blue Link to get all the information needed in real time.



“The sales reps drive around with products in their vans and can sell products directly from their truck to the customers. With offline POS we do not have to worry about internet connectivity. We can literally sell to a customer anywhere in the state. We also use offline POS in our warehouse so that even when the internet goes down, we can still sell products.”

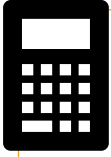


“As far as customer satisfaction, when we can provide a website, mix and match deals, and monthly flyers these are great offers to our customers.”

-Zach Taylor

Conclusion

With the help of Blue Link ERP and its team of in-house experts, Creager has been able to automate processes, increase sales orders and better serve customers.



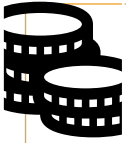
OTP Tax

Automatically calculate OTP tax for accruals on Tobacco products



Mobile Sales

Increase sales orders through B2B online order portal and by providing mobile tools to delivery drivers



Customization

Customized process for managing mix and match quantity deals and automatically updating pricing



Reporting

Easy reporting through Excel and live linked data for real-time visibility into business health

“We have only been using Blue Link for 3 years now I don’t believe we have really utilized all the functionality yet and we are instore for more to come.”

– Zach Taylor



BLUE LINK

Inventory and Accounting ERP Software

With a focus on small to medium size businesses, Blue Link strives to help companies grow and improve their processes by providing innovative solutions to complex problems – without the large price tag.

- ✓ **Grow Your Business** with a fully integrated and automated system
- ✓ **Decrease Costs** with better inventory management
- ✓ **Save Time and Reduce Errors** with automated processes across all business operations

Want to learn how you can become a success story?

If you're interested in improving processes, automating your warehouse and growing your business, [contact us](#).