

Case Study

Order Automation

North Georgia Brick Automates
the Brick Industry



Why North Georgia Brick Needed Automation

As North Georgia Brick (NGB) approaches its 25th anniversary, it has become known as one of the leading brick distributors in the United States from its primary service area of Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. From its core of 5 distribution locations, NGB employs one of the largest professional sales organizations with a goal to meet and exceed the needs of its broad customer base in residential, multi-family, and commercial markets. NGB's long time sales force possesses superior knowledge in all aspects of the brick and masonry industry and is able to offer superior service through prompt deliveries using its large fleet and numerous distribution sites. Each delivery truck is outfitted with Princeton lifts and monitored using our state of the art Global Positioning and Order Tracking Systems enabling NGB to identify and respond to all customer inquiries regarding the status of any order. NGB is indeed in a priority position to ensure timely and accurate deliveries to its Customers.

Distribution to the Building industry is a highly competitive and heavily transactional business. David Westbrooks, General Manager spoke about some of NGB's logistical issues. "We deliver 75 to 100 orders per day on over 50 trucks running 3-4 routes per day. Since different shades of Brick can easily be confused, inventory tracking and shipping is critical. We need a process that requires as little manual intervention as possible to guarantee on time job site deliveries. With 5 brick yards and over 50 manufacture warehouses to move inventory from, fulfilling orders and dispatching trucks in a timely manner is critical."

Customer Service is paramount for NGB as product orders are guaranteed to arrive at the job site at pre-determined dates. Efficient delivery and inventory management is crucial to their success. System stability and access to order data in order to collaborate at all levels is critical. NGB's legacy system clearly did not meet their needs and management understood the importance of implementing an integrated solution that would support their current and future needs.

"Our partnership with ACE Micro has allowed us to explore solutions based on Dynamics GP. They have made it a priority to keep abreast of our business issues and match them to solutions that increase efficiency, profitability and customer satisfaction while allowing us to focus more on specific core business issues and opportunities."

John Alvord, CEO

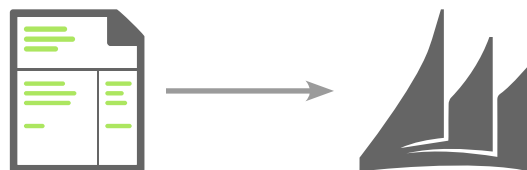
The Solution

North Georgia Brick implemented Microsoft® Business Solutions – Great Plains® and has integrated the solution to their custom Order Entry Dispatch system using eConnect with assistance from their reselling partner ACE Microtechnology.

This integration provides a custom interface for their order entry department to easily place orders without having to access the Great Plains solution. The orders are pushed directly into Great Plains for credit checks and further processing by the accounting and credit departments.

NGB implemented payroll and accounts payable and core accounting functionality in a matter of weeks. Since the initial implementation they have added human resources, collections management and an integrated time clock system-Time Matrix.

Payroll processing now goes directly into Great Plains payroll without need for an integration tool or duplicate employee entry into two disparate systems. Training new employees on the old UNIX based system was literally not available. With Microsoft® Business Solutions – Great Plains® training new employees is simple due to the many resources available to assist in training needs.



Business Solution

When NGB first brought the new system live, they knew it would be just a matter of time and they would have access to significantly more information, faster. **“Before, our sales team had to wait as much as 5 days for open order sales reports that now can be printed on demand”** said Carl Gunter, CFO. This saves everyone in the company time and manual labor to extract the information. Having a modular based system that truly talks together was our ultimate goal added Gunter.

In addition to the increased visibility into our data and timely reporting of the data we have seen improvements in customer service. The stability of the system allows our customer service people to timely respond to order status and expected arrival dates. Built-in customer credit checks and customer holds allows us to service our “A” customers with the best service in the industry thus enabling us to remain competitive in the marketplace. **“Our next goal is to automate the brickyards with bar coding and more effective dispatch which will in turn put us miles ahead of our competition with more on time orders to jobsites.”** said Gunter.