

HOW WARREN MAKES PROGRESS



BUILDING A SOLID FUTURE WITH DMSI SOFTWARE

Growing pains may hurt, but they also signify success. Just ask Warren Lumber & Millwork, a distribution business operating throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania. What started as a small lumber yard has grown into one of the region's largest independent lumber and millwork dealers. But growth comes at a price, attests Rob Mersch, Information Systems Manager for Warren Lumber & Millwork. "Over the years our business model had changed substantially, but our technology didn't. We needed a more sophisticated system with increased horse power designed specifically for distribution. Being a leader requires more than just 'getting by'; we were looking to build a solid future for our company."

As the company evolved from a small, local retail business into a large, regional lumber and millwork dealer, its legacy business management solution no longer met its needs. The company faced numerous challenges, including inventory management, lack of streamlined communications and visibility across its operations.



CHALLENGE

Business constrained by technology; unable to support growth and a new distribution business model with existing system

SOLUTION

DMSi's Agility, the industry's leading enterprise software solution for the building material and forestry markets

BENEFIT

Driving efficiency across the organization; streamlined operations and improved inventory management; able to quickly react to changing market conditions and opportunities

Because the system wasn't built to manage the complexities of a distribution operation, Mersch and his team spent much of their time trying to retrofit the system to meet their needs, even going so far as to develop some of their own systems to try to fill in the gaps. "In the end we had a mishmash solution that still didn't meet our needs. We were always behind the eight ball trying to force ourselves to work the way our system worked instead of having it work for us. Clearly that wasn't the most efficient or strategic way for us to operate."

MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE

In its search for a new solution, Warren sought to drive efficiencies across its operation, improve its ability to manage Business to Business (B2B) distribution, provide employees with real-time access to information, and achieve the agility and flexibility to meet the evolving needs of the business, the market and its customers.

"We wanted more than today's face on yesterday's technology," explains Mersch. "Unlike many of their competitors, DMSi made the tough decision a few years ago to build a new, modern system rather than slapping a nice Windows GUI on top of an old system. I am sure this was the more costly and time-consuming solution, but it was the right thing to do. That played a significant role in our decision to choose DMSi, not only because their technology was better, but because their philosophy to 'do the right thing' lends itself to moving the business forward, to being innovative." Today Warren is using DMSi's Agility system, the industry's leading enterprise software solution for the building material and forestry markets.

The fact that Agility is based on the Progress® OpenEdge® business application development platform also played a factor in Warren's decision to choose Agility. "OpenEdge is current technology that thousands of companies are using today to build their solutions. Whereas other solutions like Oracle tend to be costly and time consuming to maintain, with OpenEdge we have been able to 'set it and forget it'. It is a scalable, reliable and flexible platform that requires little to no maintenance while delivering the high performance we require."

Today, every employee at Warren Lumber uses Agility. The solution manages all of the company's business needs—everything from the front end



"Agility is the only IT solution we have. It is the only one we need."

*Rob Mersch
Information Systems Manager
Warren Lumber & Millwork*

through the back office. "Agility is the only IT solution we have. It is the only one we need," says Mersch.

FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE

Since Warren implemented Agility, Mersch says the lumber and millwork dealer has completely revolutionized the way it does business. "Agility works for us; it works the way we need to work. Our business is no longer constrained by technology, it is empowered by it!"

Access to Real-Time Information Drives Efficiency

Visibility into information and into the company's operations as a whole has delivered efficiencies across the entire business. With access to centralized, real-time information employees are now empowered with the information they need to better perform their jobs and meet their customers' needs. "Our people always did a good job. But with limited access to information, inevitably our processes lacked efficiency," explains Mersch. "Today, information flows in an intuitive way across our business."

Warren has evolved from a reactive business to a streamlined, proactive organization. Both the Operations and Executive teams now have the comprehensive and immediate access to information required to make thoughtful, strategic and long-term decisions. "We are now ahead of the game," says Mersch. "With the click of a button I can access anything I need. And all of our operations information flows directly into the system so our management team can run any numbers they need to make more informed business decisions. Agility has truly changed the way we think and act."

Customer Service is able to better serve the customer because they have a holistic view into the customer's history. And the Operations group has visibility into the status of any given product or order and can research any issue or situation with ease.

Warren is using add-on products developed for use with Agility to further enhance their system, including a document imaging feature. Today, when a delivery ticket is signed by a customer's employee on a job site, Warren is able to scan that document and immediately send it to the customer as proof of delivery, expediting the payment process and Warren's ability to recognize revenue.

Automation Streamlines Operations and Improves Communication

By running its entire operation using Agility, Warren has automated all of its operations and consequently streamlined its entire business. “Our communication across the business has dramatically improved, and with it our efficiency levels,” says Mersch.

Prior to the solution, Warren’s entire shipping process was manual. Today, the information is captured immediately in the system in one step. Mersch says their streamlined processes have also had a significant impact on Warren’s Customer Service group. “The group now has a much better and more efficient process for quoting jobs, developing quotes, maintaining or following up on quotes and then turning those into sales orders. There is no longer a need to perform multiple transactions—just one transaction flows all the way through the system.”

Improved Inventory Management

The company’s inventory management has improved significantly. “If our old system said we had three of a given item you weren’t really confident in the data. Sometimes we had too much inventory and other times not enough to complete an order. Effective Inventory Control is not only key to optimizing our financial performance, it’s vital to keeping our customers satisfied. Nothing is worse for customer satisfaction than to have to delay an order while you wait for inventory. Today if the system says there are three in stock, there are three in stock. Our information is now real time and completely accurate. We have gained a lot in terms of our knowledge of what we have and where we have opportunities to further succeed,” says Mersch.

Business Agility and a Competitive Advantage

Warren’s business is now far more nimble, with the ability to quickly react to changing market conditions and customer requirements. Mersch says today the lumber and millwork dealer is poised to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise, which undoubtedly gives Warren a competitive advantage.

“In the past we ran a good business, but with our limited systems it took all we had just to maintain our operations. Today, we are so efficient that we

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Rob Mersch

have the freedom and ability to look and plan ahead. We are ready for anything that comes our way.”

AN ADVOCATE FOR SUCCESS

Mersch says DMSi has proven to be the dedicated and long-term partner they were looking for. “DMSi is a fantastic company. They respond to our needs and continue to act as an advocate for our success—a real partner!” Despite the downturned economy, Mersch says the business is doing well—thanks in large part to the modernization of their system and business processes. “We are in a much better place today despite the tough economy. Moving to Agility was absolutely the right thing for our business. And if faced with the same decision, we would do it all over again without a doubt.”



DMSI SOFTWARE

For over 30 years, DMSi has been the leading business management solution for distributors of building material and forest products. Nearly 400 of North America’s top lumber, millwork, roofing, siding, laminate, drywall, and other building product suppliers use DMSi software to efficiently manage daily activities in 1,500 distribution yards, shops, warehouses and offices.

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PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that enables enterprises to be operationally responsive to changing conditions and customer interactions as they occur. Our goal is to enable our customers to capitalize on new opportunities, drive greater efficiencies, and reduce risk. Progress offers a comprehensive portfolio of best-in-class infrastructure software spanning event-driven visibility and real-time response, open integration, data access and integration, and application development and management—all supporting on-premises and SaaS/cloud deployments. Progress maximizes the benefits of operational responsiveness while minimizing IT complexity and total cost of ownership.

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