Woodhill Supply Implements Conexiom to Compete with Large Competitors

Overview

Industry: Distribution

Market Sector: Construction and Hardware

Solution Used: AP Invoice Automation

ERP: Epicor Eclipse

Founded in 1958, Woodhill Supply aims to be a one-stop wholesaler for pipe, valve, fitting, plumbing, HVAC/R, and tool needs. With an extensive inventory and service offerings including complete pipe fabrication shop, tool rental program, kitchen and bath showroom, and laminate and solid surface countertop manufacturing facility, Woodhill Supply sets themselves apart from other local wholesalers.

Automation Outcomes

- Implemented Conexiom in just four weeks

- Provides family feel while keeping pricing competitive

- Expanding and increasing workload without having to hire

conexiom

Challenge

Considered to be an essential organization during the COVID-19 pandemic, Woodhill Supply needed to be always present and available. As homes and businesses experienced general sanitation issues, Woodhill had to be equipped with the necessary materials to help their customers mitigate them.

Woodhill strives to be their customer's, "Homegrown, family-owned option against the big corporations that are slowly moving into the space," per Josh Laston, Controller. Through this process, they have continued to run as a homegrown organization, meaning they, "Have not necessarily moved along with the times, which has been a key focus in the past few years. [They're] working to step up [their] game, taking away manual processes, ultimately making it easier for [their] customers, which range from large contractors with multimillion dollar projects, down to the one man, one van customer who is coming to [them] because we still have that family feel."

He continues, "We treat our customers the same, whether they are that one person or a 200-person organization." One of the value-adds Woodhill provides is the one-to-one touchpoint that is most of the time lost with larger corporations. With their entire organization under one roof, each of their customer's contacts can work closely together to give a personalized experience with the best price and service possible.

It became harder to provide best-in-class service amidst the pandemic. Alongside it came staffing issues when employees would contract the illness and were thus unable to work. Compounding this was labor constraints, especially in Woodhill's accounting department. As they were looking to expand and develop their capabilities, they had trouble hiring skilled employees to take on the increased workload.

In addition to personnel woes, one of the largest challenges Woodhill faced was a discrepancy between products names and numbers in their ERP system, Epicor Eclipse, and the names and numbers their vendors use. They became dependent upon outside vendors finding that match within their system. As they were working to enable digital picking for their orders as well as locating items within their system for product data warehouse purposes, they found that they did not have the proper information in their system to be able to connect and find the necessary information.

This led to a lot of time spent trying to manually match the information. Woodhill was desperate for a way to start bridging the gap to save their team time and to be able to leverage the tools they were trying to put in place.

> "Working with Conexiom was a double whammy and a great win on two different fronts for us. Not only were they able to automate the entry of our AP invoices, but they were also able to rectify issues we were experiencing with disparate data between our ERP system, Epicor Eclipse, and our vendor's product data."

JOSH LASTON, CONTROLLER

Solution

In the process of trying to mirror disparate bits of information within their system and within the outside services they were using, Woodhill went through massive processes trying to get the correct information in the right place. Before finding Conexiom, they accepted their fate of manual processing, which required someone to manually enter the data each time a new product was brought in. Over the course of close to a year, they had maybe entered this necessary information for 2% of their products.

As Woodhill started working with Conexiom, they were not only able to get all the data mass uploaded into their system with little to no effort required, but also freed up their sole accounts payable employee to focus on value-added tasks. Laston was looking to simplify her monotonous day-to-day tasks, allowing her time for other, more important tasks to ensure they "Were capable of using her to her fullest potential, ultimately adding a ton of value to our organization."

Much of her time was previously spent manually entering orders and tracking down issues, plus working with vendors who shorted product as a result of the current supply chain issues. To combat these product shortages, Woodhill has had to diversify themselves with additional vendors to ensure the products their customers need arrive in time. With constant price fluctuations, it required their AP processor to spend her time tracking down new pricing and ensuring the new prices matched on the invoice and purchase order.

Conexiom was able to quickly show Woodhill how their challenges would be mitigated. Woodhill has been using Eclipse to manage their entire business for the past 20 years, and in a matter of hours, Conexiom shared how their platform would integrate perfectly with Eclipse via an EDI transport. "Once the connection was made, things came through. There were no questions, it just worked for us. I can't ask for anything more than just a bit of work on the front end which allows everything to show up in the system," comments Laston.

By running invoices through Conexion's exception manager, Woodhill is able to see and correct discrepancies before they are entered into Eclipse. They have the ability to make changes immediately, avoiding major issues with inventory levels. Woodhill has also been able to create a cross-reference file in Conexiom that matches their internal product numbers with the product number coming through on invoices. With a product data warehouse, Conexiom ensures they get the correct information for their website, ultimately ensuring their pricing matches the list prices coming from their vendors.

> "Being able to achieve all of our goals in such a short timeframe and then the product itself, being able to check all of the boxes that were promised to us is something that I can honestly find a ton of value in and something that I don't regularly see when working with an enterprise software."

JOSH LASTON, CONTROLLER

Business Outcomes

Over the course of two weeks, the Conexiom Platform was implemented for 25 of Woodhill's vendors and "At the end, no questions, everything worked perfectly, and we could get to seeing the value of the partnership with Conexiom pretty much immediately," says Laston. Within four weeks, they went from signing the contract to full implementation.

By partnering with Conexiom, Woodhill Supply's AP processor no longer has to manually enter invoices. Now, she saves hours every day, allowing her to spend time tracking down inconsistencies and ensuring that pricing is accurate ultimately saving money for Woodhill and their customers. While she was initially concerned about being replaced by Conexiom, she has since seen a huge improvement in her quality of life. By including her every step of the way, she was able to see that there is no replacing her with technology. Conexiom was being brought in to make her life easier and let her bring value to the organization.

Laston says, "As we rolled into our partnership with Conexiom, one of the things that I, as the leader of the finance group, really got to see was that our AP person was able to spend a lot more time digging into issues that ultimately saves the company money because she is able to track down any inconsistencies within invoices, work with our receiving group to be able to pinpoint anything that may have been back ordered that wasn't necessarily labeled as back ordered on invoices, and find a lot more time to make sure that we aren't paying more than we need to at that time."

He continues, "Conexiom did a fantastic job of showing what the benefit would be to our organization. It was a no brainer in the long run. We've automated payables, which ultimately is the core of what Conexiom does and does fantastic work, but also our secondary goal of being able to connect our products with what the product number is on invoices. That two wins right there were enough to sign me up."

Not only did Woodhill see two big wins from partnering with Conexiom, but the only change they had to make was setting up rules on their AP inbox to forward their invoices to the Conexiom Platform. Otherwise, there have been no other process changes required and their vendors continue to email them invoices exactly how they were before.

Now, with Conexiom up and running, there are additional expansion opportunities available to Woodhill. They now have the data needed to truly implement eCommerce and can work to streamline their warehousing through RF picking. Laston says, "This partnership has truly expanded our horizons and made it so we are able to modernize at a much faster speed."

Laston's advice to others considering implementing Conexiom is, "Make sure all stakeholders in your organization are playing a role from the beginning. Make sure that they are getting to see the full value, because it's an honest amazement to everyone how much time Conexiom can save and how many errors it can eliminate. Everyone can see value from their own angle and bringing the entire team together to see the value in something like Conexiom is absolutely amazing to see."

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