

Industry Downturn Allows Bob Davis Sales to Reboot, Rebound



“Acumatica’s unlimited pricing structure was a big factor. With NetSuite, we knew we would be dealing with Oracle (NetSuite’s new parent) and felt its pricing would be going up, knowing how large companies operate.”

– Brett Davis, Operations Manager, BDS

OVERVIEW

More than a decade ago, Bob Davis Sales moved from a paper-based operation to a digital operation, one you might consider first-generation. The company had three locations and each location was run on a version of a legacy Sage instance that didn’t talk to each other, which was inefficient and time-consuming when it came to forming an accurate picture of the business. As the oil and gas industry rebounded, Bob Davis Sales decided to invest in Acumatica to streamline operations and increase sales.

SITUATION

When the price of oil fell from \$110 a barrel to \$30 in 2014, oil and gas exploration firms shuttered, which sent shockwaves throughout the supply chain. At Bob Davis Sales, a distributor of products that help exploration firms build new infrastructure and operations in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas, sales dropped four-fold like many in the industry.

BDS’s invoice process involved one employee keying in data from printed out sales orders into an invoice module. The family-run operation saw its monthly volume of invoices shrink to some 400 from 1,200 leaving the employee keying in data from three disparate systems into a fourth, with little do. When that employee left, the job was handed to Brett Davis, Operations Manager, who had joined the privately held company a few years earlier.

Although the new job function didn’t take much of his time, Davis knew that when the industry rebounded, the task would be overwhelming, especially considering his other operation duties. “Our system was basically computerized ticket writing,” he says. “What we did was terribly inefficient.”

He convinced his grandfather it would be more economical and prudent to move to a better financial system, one that could not only save invoicing time but provide productivity gains as well. They should do that, he reasoned, rather than hire more people to continue the company’s inefficient processes.

SOLUTION

With approval from his grandfather and dad, who runs the company, Davis began evaluating the company’s ERP options. He wanted a product that suited small to medium-sized businesses, one that wasn’t bloated with overkill features, and one that had a sales channel offering high-touch consulting services. Through online research and reviews he found Intacct, SAP, NetSuite, and Acumatica, and evaluated Acumatica and NetSuite based on high reviews by magazines such as PC Magazine. Davis also knew as the oil and gas industries rebounded, Bob Davis Sales would be adding to its 15-person team, and thus Oracle NetSuite’s per-user pricing would escalate.

COMPANY

- **Location:** Kilgore, TX
- **Industry:** Distribution
- **Application Evaluated:** Oracle NetSuite

KEY RESULTS

- Slashed time required to create invoices from 30 hours a week to 2 hours
- Improved inventory and profitability
- Saved at least \$40,000 by not having to re-create old inventory input process
- Streamlined processes, improved productivity and increased collaboration
- Shaved reporting from a day to minutes at most

Acumatica partner AIM Solutions' quick response to Davis' inquiry helped seal the deal for Acumatica. "Our concern was never capabilities but always had to do with the relationship with the people we'd be working with," Davis says. "AIM came out here immediately and developed a good relationship right off the bat, and we had high confidence in their ability to help us."

Before the company implemented Acumatica, several systems were overhauled and streamlined. Because all three locations operated differently, they needed to change product item numbers to be consistent across all locations, for example. They also needed to make other processes uniform and consistent.

"We had to learn to work like a company with a single location," Davis says. "I always knew one day we would make everything uniform and we used this opportunity to do that."

BENEFITS

Bob Davis Sales saw an immediate boost in productivity not only from centralizing its three operations but by centralizing its customer accounts, many which were also run as separate entities due to their complexity. Historically the company operated as a manufacturer's representative and consigned inventory, and each of its 24 manufacturers was run as its own company. That meant sales logged into as many as 27 systems a day—27 systems that didn't talk to each other.

As the company evolved from a manufacturer's rep to product distributor, the company started carrying its own inventory, which needed to be tracked separately from inventory from manufacturers. Some legacy customers didn't change their sales models, so Bob Davis Sales still needs to track inventory based upon manufacturer.

"The time I spend invoicing went from 30 hours to 2 hours and I'm doing more now as the industry rebounds. It's just an amazing burden that's been taken off me."

— Brett Davis, Operations Manager, BDS

"A lot of our peers have the same problem," Davis explains about the multiple systems and log ins. "We did it that way because someone else did."

Logging into one system and having access to inventory, sales and other information from more than 25 vendors of various forms in one system is incredibly helpful. In addition to getting used to the single-number inventory system, employees adopted new, more efficient processes, Davis says.

For example, rather than calling or emailing another office to see what might be in inventory, now sales simply looks in Acumatica. Reviewing inventory in stock also means that two locations don't need to create paperwork to transfer products, which was once quite time consuming. Now the team is more productive and efficient. Acumatica's invoicing process makes Davis' job much easier.

Not only can they find information faster, but they build reports faster too. Davis previously spent an entire day creating a single report for a manufacturer, but now it takes a mere 30 minutes. Providing accurate reports quickly to customers boosts goodwill and confidence, he says.

Acumatica has also allowed the sales team to be more productive on the road because they have access to data from their phones, inventory levels aren't bloated, and they rarely run out of popular items due to Acumatica's replenishment feature.

"Because we didn't realize we already had something in another warehouse, we would buy things we didn't need and carry excess inventory," Davis says. "In addition, we relied on internal knowledge for special pricing because the old system could only keep track of a few items."

"We've really taken the human element out of things like special pricing and leaned on the Acumatica system, which has paid a lot of dividends," Davis says. "It's made my life a whole lot easier."