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Situation

Summary

High-end, architectural lighting is a feature present in almost every public space. Most pay little attention to its presence – except when it does not work, is poorly designed or is of exceptional quality. Naturally, the design, manufacture and distribution of these products is of paramount importance to architectural lighting companies, which require an effective Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system to fluidly and efficiently integrate all aspects of the business from high level financials to basic warehousing tasks. When BEGA-US found its existing ERP software was not functioning optimally, the firm turned to Vormittag Associates, Inc. (VAI) to find the best solution to replace its outdated system.

Customer Profile

Founded in 1985 as a joint venture partnership with the managing partners of BEGA, located in Menden, Germany, BEGA-US is a privately held U.S. Corporation, headquartered in Carpinteria, CA.

BEGA identifies lighting needs in today's architectural environment and fulfils those needs for both interior and exterior applications. The company designs and manufactures a broad range of lighting products with uncompromising emphasis on elegance in design, superior materials and performance.

Problem

Context

An outdated product configurator and a disparate accounting system challenged BEGA's daily operations. The company's product configurator lacked the ability to cost materials as orders were built, leaving BEGA to manually calculate cost for thousands of items—a waste of precious time in an environment where the ability to produce quality products quickly and efficiently is critical. Therefore, costing and billing for a project was more difficult than necessary. In addition, the company's old green screen "sea of menus" did not have the point, click and drill-down capabilities of a more modern graphical user interface (GUI). GUI provides a friendly, windows-like environment, which users prefer and BEGA desired.

Objectives

BEGA looked to resolve issues throughout the enterprise including the accounting, manufacturing, engineering, warehousing, purchasing and sales departments. The company's primary goal was to replace the outdated accounting system with comprehensive ERP software that could seamlessly integrate all of these functional areas with the ability to retrieve relevant data across departments, analyze it quickly and make real-time decisions. Additionally, BEGA pursued a sales configurator system that could simultaneously build item numbers and price lighting orders. Finally, BEGA sought a solution that would reduce processing and development time across the sales, engineering and manufacturing departments –

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

BEGA-US is a privately held architectural lighting firm headquartered in Carpinteria, CA. The company supplies lighting products for a broad range of both interior and exterior applications.

Objectives

BEGA looked to replace its disparate accounting system with a modern ERP package that could seamlessly integrate all departments and reduce processing and development times. Additionally, BEGA pursued a sales configurator system that could simultaneously build item numbers and price lighting orders.

Solution

- S2K for Manufacturing
- Capacity Requirement Planning
- Warehouse Management System

Benefits

Since the implementation of VAI's S2K, BEGA has seen a significant improvement in the company's operating efficiency and data management is streamlined in an integrated and accessible solution. BEGA saw a significant improvement in the process flow as well as reductions in order to shipment times.

The sales tool was customized specifically for the BEGA sales team so they can design, build and cost a product estimate from one location and in one program.

a critical quality in an industry where sale-to-delivery timeliness can define a company's reputation.

Finding the Right Partner
BEGA researched many solutions before deciding that VAI was best suited to meet its specific needs. VAI created a 'Sales Tool' to electronically build part numbers and price BEGA's lighting products – solving BEGA's inability to manufacture products and cost materials concurrently.

Moreover, VAI's experience and knowledge of manufacturing, coupled with its devoted team of skilled professionals, cinched the deal. BEGA was particularly impressed by VAI's 'no pressure' sales tactics as well as the company's competitive product pricing.

Solution
Process
VAI worked directly with BEGA to assess the company's requirements and devise the appropriate solution to meet all of its needs. After the initial consultation, S2K for Manufacturing went live at BEGA in November 2007. The implementation directly and positively impacted all aspects of the business. The most prominent improvement has been a direct result of the customized Sales Tool, which allows team members to enter a base item number and then choose from several options such as color and wattage. The system then identifies an itemized parts list, order number and cost estimate automatically – saving the company precious time and money.

Using the Solution to Solve the Problem
S2K has provided a platform for BEGA to realize its goals – significant improvement in the company's operating efficiency and streamlined data management in an integrated and accessible solution. This top-down view frees management to view aggregate financial records in real-time, finding problems before they occur. Concurrently, the instantaneous data retrieval capabilities make customer interactions easy and efficient. Sales employees can check current stock levels before taking an order, allowing staff to predict production times accurately.

Pete Zimmerman, VAI Manufacturing Segment Manager, said, "BEGA needed an updated ERP system with the flexibility to address the firm's specific criteria. VAI collaborated with BEGA to design a solution that was easy to use and fully integrated. We are confident that S2K, backed by our dedicated team, will provide the ultimate platform for BEGA's continued growth."

Evaluation
Results and Benefits
The implementation has been an outstanding success for BEGA. The company grew significantly in 2008, partially attributable to S2K. Production times have been reduced dramatically and customer satisfaction ratings have increased. BEGA saw a dramatic improvement in the simplified sales order system including reduced time for order entry and improved efficiency in the order process. The improvement in process flow, from order to shipment, was a paramount success, as were the impressive reductions in planning and purchasing time.

BEGA, impressed with S2K for Manufacturing's results, implemented VAI's Capacity Requirement Planning (CRP) to eliminate a disparate production planning system. The company is now in the process of implementing VAI's Warehouse Management System (WMS).

Customer Quote

According to Terri Gennaro, MIS Manager at BEGA, "BEGA experienced its largest growth ever last year, and having VAI's S2K system helped our company absorb the growth easily. The Sales Tool that VAI created specifically for BEGA was an important upgrade for our engineering and sales staff, and the newly integrated ERP system was so efficient that despite our record growth, we didn't have to bring on many new employees – significantly increasing company profits. VAI's customer service, attention to detail and willingness to customize modules puts VAI steps above the competition."

For More Information

For more information about VAI products and services, call VAI at 1.800.824.7776 or email sales@vai.net To access information using the World Wide Web, go to www.vai.net .