

Integrated ERP Solution Improves NorthLand's Processes & Bottom Line



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- Luke Lundt
CFO

Business Drivers

- Improve performance tracking
- Better insight into sales and expenses
- Improve visibility into SKUs and inventory costs

Northland Fishing Tackle, founded in 1975, designs and sells an exclusive line of products for fishing enthusiasts. They are one of the country's leading producers of premium quality jigs, live bait rigs, spinnerbaits and spoons for Panfish, Perch, Wall-eye, Bass, Trout, Northern Pike and Muskie. The company's ability to continuously release

innovative products is fueled by the entire management team, who are all experienced at fishing themselves, having a deep passion for the fishing industry.

However, while their innovative products were flying off the shelves, Northland's distribution system was not keeping pace. The company's supply chain was not fully integrated and the information they needed to make decisions was not readily available. They realized that in order to maintain their growth they needed an integrated back-end supply chain management system that was as great as their front-end products.

The Need for Accurate Information Drives Change

Northland Fishing Tackle started their search for an enterprise wide ERP solution with a mind towards finding a solution with a low total cost of ownership. The company was looking for a system that had proven the ability to provide a fast ROI for their customers so that Northland could quickly see the benefits of upgrading their supply chain software. More specifically, they wanted better tracking of both their sales and expenses in order to better understand how the company was performing. They sought to be able to track both sales and expenses by customer, product, and salesperson. On the inventory side they wanted a better way to manage and track their SKUs and inventory costs to get a better gauge of their true costs and total inventory counts.

Apprise®, with its industry specific functionality, was able to accomplish both of these aspects for Northland as well as deliver new data the company never had access to before. This newfound access to data helped Northland's management team identify how the company was performing on a more granular level. They also made the decision to host the application with Apprise Software and have Apprise Software manage their EDI. Both decisions were made with an eye towards freeing up internal resources and the knowledge that they could rely on Apprise Software's expertise to deliver the results they needed.

Profile in Brief

- Designs, tests and distributes fishing gear and accessories including jigs, rigs, baits, spoons and more
- Sells online and to fishing tackle shops in the U.S. and Canada
- Founded by fishing enthusiasts with a passion for the sport

Business Impact

- Streamlined warehouse picking and other processes
- Improved reporting efficiencies by 50 percent
- Gained full visibility into backorders
- Significantly reduced chargebacks

Implementation Made Easy

Like many companies, after the software decision was made, Northland Fishing Tackle started to become anxious about the implementation process. Their team members had been doing certain processes the same way for many years and implementing Apprise meant changing the technology being used as well as the processes themselves.

Thankfully, their anxieties were alleviated and the implementation process was much smoother than they had imagined. There was a learning curve at first, but after a short time working with project managers and Apprise® the team found the software easy to use and everyone is pleased with the progress team members have made. The Apprise Software project managers, according to CFO Luke

Lundt, "Have been great to work with. They were honest, came on site when we needed, returned emails and calls promptly, walked us through processes step by step, and outlined the best ways to use system processes."

Northland Fishing Tackle credits their clear-cut implementation process as part of the reason why they were able to see a fast return on their investment. It allowed Apprise users to quickly master new processes and improve their efficiency on the job. After going live, Northland has also found Apprise customer support a useful resource for answering questions and providing assistance.

Rapid Returns and Improvements

"Apprise improved our processes and saved us money. A truly great improvement from where we were just eight months ago."

- Luke Lundt
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In under a year Apprise has already greatly enhanced Northland Fishing Tackle's supply chain and overall business efficiency. They now have access to data that they never had been able to see before and, with the help of Apprise project managers, have updated about 75 percent of their processes ranging from simplifying their UPC code structure to finding a better way to handle product packaging. For the CFO, creating sales and commissions reports is now 50 percent more efficient which has allowed him to focus extra time on more important issues. While the company used to have zero insight into their backorders, they have now seen a 100 percent improvement in backorder visibility. However, their two biggest improvements have been in warehouse efficiencies and minimizing chargebacks.

Prior to implementation, Northland Fishing Tackle was worried that changing over to Apprise® was going to slow down their picking process because users were going to have to learn an entire new system. However, after taking full advantage of Apprise's warehouse management tools, including integrated pre-pack and cartonization rules to maximize picking, they saw rapid enhancements. Within just eight months they ended up with a 400 percent improvement in warehouse picking efficiency and a 90 percent improvement in inventory accuracy. Now that their warehouse processes are more effective they are saving a significant amount of money each and every month in both overhead and inventory costs.

The other major improvement has been in chargebacks. Northland sells products to major mass merchants and was repeatedly getting hit with chargeback penalties. Frustrated by the lack of options to rectify the situation, they turned to the Apprise chargeback management tools to help measure, track, and recover chargebacks. After implementing Apprise, Northland has seen their shipping accuracy improve all the way up to 98 percent which has helped their retailer relationships as well as improved their processes and their bottom line. These rapid improvements in warehouse efficiency and chargeback reductions are two of the main reasons why Northland is receiving a fast return on investment from implementing Apprise.

Overall, said Lundt, "There has been a lot of work and learning through the implementation. The key is that Apprise Software improved our processes and saved us money. A truly great improvement from where we were just eight months ago."



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