

Improved Visibility and Efficiency Through Integration

Business Drivers

- System Consolidation
- Process Automation

Catalina Lighting is a 30-year-old designer, marketer and distributor of residential and office lighting products. The company's product line includes more than one thousand SKUs sold through mass merchants, specialty showrooms and the trade. Marketed under the brand names Catalina, Dana, VisionMax, Tensor and Illuminada, as well as private label brands, Catalina's portfolio includes many Energy Star-rated products.

As a global market leader, Catalina Lighting operates in the Americas, Europe and Asia. In 2008, the lighting leader scrapped three separate systems and moved its operations onto Apprise®, an integrated ERP solution. Since then, the company has streamlined communications and integrated operations in Canada and the U.S. A future project to implement Apprise in the company's Shenzhen, China office will complete the supply chain loop to provide 100 percent visibility into the company's operations. Apprise Software's Nanjing, China office will guide the implementation slated for 2009.

Disjointed Systems Negatively Impact Efficiency

After years of expansion and numerous acquisitions in the competitive lighting industry, Catalina found itself with several disjointed systems to manage its global business requirements. The company wanted to integrate all its operations and eliminate the costly and time-consuming modifications that were required to keep its previous systems operational.

For starters, Catalina's North American employees relied on a heavily modified BPCS system to meet business needs. The aging system required numerous workarounds to keep operations flowing. A separate, homegrown system developed for the company's Asian-based employees resulted in less than efficient organizational processes. And a third warehouse management system (WMS) further hampered efficiency.

Catalina's old warehouse management system ran through BPCS to transmit inventory and other data between its Miami, Florida headquarters and warehouse operations in Ontario, Canada and Tupelo, Mississippi. Because the system was disjointed, it often performed erratically. Time and again, inventory data went missing during transmission, leaving the company, and its balance sheet, exposed. Solving the problem required an entirely new ERP system.

Discovery Leads to Apprise Software

During the first quarter of 2007, the Catalina Lighting team conducted a discovery process that included Apprise and other big name solution providers. While other providers offered stable, but generic ERP solutions, only Apprise Software offered a reliable, out-of-the-box solution with the industry specific focus and functionality Catalina needed to compete in the consumer goods marketplace, such as integrated EDI, chargeback management, and profitability analysis capabilities.

In January 2008, Catalina Lighting went live on Apprise – effectively streamlining its business operations with one centralized solution for North America. Now, Catalina Lighting has more accurate visibility of its supply chain, enabling inventory intelligence to be viewed and acted upon from Ontario to Miami and Tupelo.



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-Gerald Woelcke
Chief Financial Officer
Catalina Lighting

Profile in Brief

- Global leader in residential and commercial lighting products
- More than 1000 product SKUs sold through mass merchants, specialty showrooms and to the trade
- Manufactured in Asia with distribution operations in the US and Canada



Business Impact

- Improved Inventory Visibility
- Synchronized Order Entry Data
- Automated Operational Processes
- Sales and Profitability Analysis
- \$600,000 annual savings

Streamlined Processes. Improved Performance.

Under Catalina's previous systems, daily tasks required multiple, often duplicate, steps to keep its international operations in sync. With Apprise, processes that once required three steps are now completed in just one step thanks to automated features that streamline the PO entry process.

Other benefits of the new system include the ability to pull and analyze data on each product SKU. Catalina Lighting once had 3400 SKUs in its product catalog. Now, thanks to intelligence from Apprise, the company has trimmed its product line to about 1100 of its most profitable SKUs.

"With the use of Apprise, we were able to identify slow moving, unprofitable inventory," said Gerald Woelcke, CFO. "The new system has given us the tools to review accurate information and react to it. We have been able to reduce inventory levels and the overhead associated with carrying the excess inventory. With up-to-date information, customer service and warehouse productivity has been improved."

Other functions allow the company to retain notes on products and processes right in the system. Notes can be keyed into the system and documents can be attached to create virtual files — enabling Catalina to store product history and other data and share it electronically with authorized users across functions, in real-time. Currently, Catalina is uploading high-resolution photos, instructions, packaging data and product specification changes directly into Apprise where customers have easy access to the information.



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Chief Financial Officer

During implementation, Woelcke also oversaw a project to document and simplify Catalina's operational processes. Tasks that were once manual, such as bank reconciliations, are now automated. Direct import orders that required duplicate key entry can now be handled in one easy step.

Catalina once accomplished financial reporting tasks through Excel and other spreadsheet tools such as F9. Apprise's Excel-like functionality and integration accomplishes all those tasks in one easy-to-use system. And EDI tasks, required to keep the company compliant with its largest customers, are now integrated thanks to Apprise® EDI Solutions.

Sales Intelligence & Profit Analysis Drive Better Business Decisions

Among Woelcke's favorite features is the Apprise Executive Information System (EIS), which gives the company customer-level and product-level sales and profitability analysis.

"The system's EIS intelligence gives us accurate, up-to-date information on a daily basis," said Woelcke. "We're able to easily review the daily shipments and margins by customer and by product. Sometimes we discover an item has been keyed incorrectly, or material cost increases have eroded the margin on a given SKU. The EIS tool helps us react faster and gives us the information we need to make effective business decisions."

With the help of Apprise, Catalina Lighting now has more efficient processes, better business insight, and user-friendly tools to help the global company manage its entire business. Instead of several disjointed systems, Catalina has integrated its importing, shipping, warehouse management, financials and a host of other business critical tasks into one global supply chain solution.



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