

Industry Specific Solution Gives Sportcraft Competitive Advantage

Business Drivers:

- Retailer Compliance Requirements
- Expected Growth
- Streamlined Operations

Founded in 1926, Sportcraft, Ltd. was the first major sporting goods manufacturer and distributor to offer its products to the American consumer through catalogs. Since then, Sportcraft has continued to lead the market with innovative products, creative design, packaging and display. And today, it is a dominant force in the distribution of indoor and outdoor sporting goods, table games, fitness equipment and cycling gear.

With rapid growth planned for the future, and an increased focus on sales through retailers and mass merchants, Sportcraft faced new operational challenges and vendor compliance requirements. Existing systems and processes, which were largely designed for complex manufacturing, no longer met its needs and lacked the flexibility required to address the emerging compliance standards of its retailer and mass merchant customers.

Game Changing Compliance Requirements

With WalMart and Dick's Sporting Goods as two of its major customers, Sportcraft was seeing an increasing portion of sales to large retailers and mass merchants. These customers were driving new requirements, such as RFID, which would require significant operational changes in order to comply. Lack of compliance could mean lost sales and significant chargebacks — negatively impacting its bottom line.

By working with the right software provider, Sportcraft believed it could streamline its operations, meet customer compliance requirements and capitalize on sales and profitability growth. A dynamic, flexible application provider would be able to act as its partner to identify the right solutions to meet its specific business needs and aid in implementing industry best-practices that could deliver a competitive advantage.

Jim Neitzel, chief information officer at Sportcraft, Ltd., led the Sportcraft team in evaluating its needs and identifying the right solution. "Past experience pointed me to Apprise Software, Inc.," said Neitzel. "Apprise Software's consumer goods distribution expertise and focus meant their team would truly understand our business model and processes and assured us we would be working with a partner committed to addressing our emerging compliance needs."

Sportcraft's existing JD Edwards system was designed more for manufacturing than distribution. The system was hard to customize — making it slow to modify and difficult to upgrade — it also drove processes which were more complex than necessary into Sportcraft's operations. The system's lack of focus on consumer goods distribution meant new industry specific requirements, such as RFID, would have to be handled outside the software — complicating processes and lacking integration. The Apprise® solution enabled more of Sportcraft's daily needs to be handled within a standard application and allowed for easy customization to address unique needs. Enhanced integration provided better access to real-time information and reports across all business operations and enabled deeper insight into, and control over, business performance.



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Chief Information Officer

Profile in Brief

- Distributes indoor and outdoor sporting goods, fitness and cycling gear to mass merchants such as Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods
- Leader in innovative product design, packaging and display
- Headquarters in Mt. Olive, New Jersey — Established in 1926



Business Impact

- Retailer Compliance
- Enterprise Integration
- Improved Business Intelligence
- Improved Demand Planning
- Streamlined Operations

Winning Operational Improvements

“The integrated system and logical application structure are a good-fit for our business model and processes and will enable quick time-to-market,” said Neitzel. “It took us three years to get our previous accounts receivable application where we wanted it. We expect to get the entire Apprise system up and running in six months.”



With a more integrated system, Sportcraft expects to benefit from efficiency and productivity gains. “The integration of the Apprise system empowers users to get their jobs done more quickly and efficiently — allowing us to grow our business without needing to add additional resources,” said Neitzel. Reduced customization will mean less money and less time will be required to run the system, freeing up resources for other business needs and reducing the long term cost of ownership.

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With Apprise Software’s focus and expertise in consumer goods distribution, Sportcraft is confident that it has aligned itself with a longterm partner who is committed to addressing both its current and evolving industry and customer compliance requirements.

“The Apprise® system provides full functionality for our current industry and customer specific compliance requirements, such as import management and container tracking, EDI, UCC 128 labeling, bills of lading, cross-docking and direct shipping,” said Neitzel. “And, Apprise has also demonstrated its commitment to helping us achieve RFID compliance and whatever else our largest customers might have in store for us next.” The availability of industry compliant solutions will allow Sportcraft to implement best-practices, streamline operations and build and sustain a competitive advantage. Ongoing customer compliance will ensure that Sportcraft is ready to meet the needs of its largest customers while minimizing chargebacks and maximizing profitability.



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