



Client Success

POWER CURBERS

MANUFACTURING

POWER CURBERS COMPANIES CURBS COSTS AND PAVES ROAD TO EFFICIENCY



CHALLENGE

A lack of consulting support, CRM integration and field service struggles plagued Power Curbers Companies' previous usage of its Sage 500 through its former VAR. As a legacy system built using Microsoft's Visual Basic 6.0 (VB6), Sage 500 is dependent upon Microsoft's support of VB6.

SOLUTION

As the industrial manufacturer's trusted technology advisor, Net at Work recommended a switch to Sage X3 and Microsoft Dynamics 365 Sales and Customer Service to create its own Digital Operations Platform (DOP), including private cloud hosting, to support its configure-to-order and assembly operations.

RESULTS

- Shaved over 25 minutes from its order entry process
- Rapidly pivot from Just-in-Time inventory management to overcome supply chain challenges
- Achieved new-found visibility into its component parts
- Instituted more reliable, 24/7 access to its business management solutions

For 70 years, Power Curbers Companies LLC has led the industry with its line of award-winning curb extrusion equipment. Today the industrial equipment manufacturer also designs and builds slip-form pavers, which extrude concrete slabs up to 30 feet wide and are disassembled, shipped and then reassembled on site by the company's crews. All told, the companies sell products in over 100 countries. With complex, high-value projects to track and a field services crew to empower, Power Curbers needed concrete business management solutions to support its ongoing focus on lean manufacturing, waste reduction and an unmatched customer experience. Next Generation solutions, Sage X3 and Microsoft Dynamics 365 Sales and Customer Service, are the rock-solid applications Power Curbers chose, and Net at Work is the technology advisor it leans on to keep its focus centered.

A CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP

"Our previous Value-Added Reseller (VAR) didn't have the necessary resources to support our Sage 500 application, and we had been struggling with integrating SalesLogix CRM and managing our global field service. To top it off, we were uncomfortable with the long-term prospects of relying on an application written in Visual Basic," recalls Mark Hofer, CFO of Power Curbers. "When we decided to partner with Net at Work, we used the move as an opportunity to upgrade our ERP and CRM to run our operations the way we needed."

The company considered Epicor and Acumatica before deciding on Sage X3. "We found that Sage X3 had the proven combination of core manufacturing and configuration to structure the system well for our business," Hofer adds. "And with Net at Work, we feel we have the in-depth solution expertise and industry knowledge to assist us with cloud hosting, programming, accounting, manufacturing and whatever else crops up over time."

Hofer says that the company's relationship with Net at Work was a major factor in their decision. "We became familiar with the high degree of responsiveness and service from Net at Work's management of our Sage 500 instance. We were confident in how they methodically approached system

CLIENT SUCCESS: POWER CURBERS COMPANIES



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patches, report assistance and system outages with us – as a partner – so we trusted their process to evaluate, implement and host business applications. We liked knowing that, with Net at Work, there’s one set of experts in charge and one call to make in the event of a challenge.”

As a result of their investment in their Net at Work relationship and Next Generation applications, Hofer says, “We were successfully invoicing within a week of going live with Sage X3.”

KICKING DISCONNECTS TO THE CURB

To make Sage 500 work for the company, Power Curbers previously cobbled together multiple, add-on and disparate applications. There was a third-party warehouse management system (WMS), for example, and an elaborate workbook of spreadsheets that was maintained “forever.” In addition, they needed a terminal server application to provide access to the software from its two locations and to its mobile workforce. With no integration across the applications, many tasks were manual or redundant.

And then there was the whiteboard. “The whiteboard was our control panel—it was essential,” explains Hofer. “It’s where we’d track sales prospects, available parts, crews, and production dates. We had no single home for all that data in our business applications, so it lived on the whiteboard along with a sign warning people not to mess with it.”

Following the transition to Sage X3 and Dynamics 365 Sales and Customer Service, Hofer isn’t willing to say that Power Curbers has kicked the whiteboard to the curb, but it’s now used as more of a visual aid than the keeper of priceless corporate data. “Sage X3 and Dynamics CRM provide accurate, up-to-date data, and we share that data on the whiteboard.”

Power Curbers’ ultimate Digital Operations Platform (DOP), with Sage X3 at the helm, addresses each operational area and is accessible to everyone through a secure private cloud hosting environment. “We had limited IT resources and our local Managed Services Provider (MSP) was straining to support us. With Cloud at Work, we have a more reliable Internet connection and when we want to do something overnight, Cloud has the capability to take it on.”

By eliminating disconnected processes and bottlenecks, the company is able to focus on optimizing its manufacturing processes, improving quality and efficiency at every step.



LEANING FORWARD

Lean production techniques and Kanban methodologies are popular among forward-thinking manufacturers, and Power Curbers has embraced the techniques wholeheartedly.

Lean production eliminates waste in every production area, including customer relations, product design, supplier networks, and factory management. Hofer says that the company's Next Generation ERP and CRM solutions have progressed Power Curber's lean initiatives further by eliminating manual tasks and automating production workflows.

Kanban is aimed at optimizing the manufacturing process by regulating the supply of raw materials. "Sage X3 helps us stay out in front of this, too," says Crystal Tollenaar, Parts and Production Control Manager for Power Curbers. "And with the current supply chain challenges, it's especially important for us to have this level of visibility into our component parts."

One Sage X3 feature, in particular, saves Power Curbers' staff time and leads to more accurate sales orders and happier customers. "We use the configurator tool," Tollenaar says. "It walks our sales staff through a series of questions that configure the machine to the customers' specifications. When they get through the questions, we know precisely what to build. That process used to take a half-hour or more of a salesperson's time. Now it takes less than five minutes."

SIMPLIFY COMPLEXITIES

Another way Power Curbers promotes efficient operations is through the use of phantom bills of materials (BOMs). Phantom BOMs in Sage X3 simplify and streamline production by allowing the manufacturing process to drive requirements straight through the phantom item to its components, rather than requiring a separate work order for the phantom assemblies.

"Overall, our goal is to simplify a complex manufacturing cycle as much as possible by looking for up and downstream efficiencies," explains Tollenaar. "The visibility we've gained with Sage X3 and our data analysis tools help us do that. As a result, we turn out a new machine every three days, taking thousands of parts from global suppliers and putting them into the hands of a well-trained, skilled workforce who understand the process."

Both Hofer and Tollenaar credit the platform and Net at Work's consulting team for enabling Power Curbers to respond more quickly to the supply chain challenges facing so many companies.

"We successfully relied on just-in-time for years, but that doesn't work anymore," explains Tollenaar. "Now we need to know where parts are in the system, if there are substitute parts or alternate suppliers, and what our order backlog looks like. Net at Work has helped us configure Sage X3 to give us those answers so we can remain agile and productive."

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Hofer adds, "We're now double the size we were when we first started working with Net at Work. They've grown and scaled right along with us. We're continually impressed with their depth of knowledge across various teams and with Sage development."

He concludes, "I'd recommend Net at Work to other manufacturers with complex operations because of the breadth and depth of their expertise. It would be very difficult to find another partner like Net at Work."

ABOUT NET AT WORK

Founded in 1996, Net at Work is a leading technology advisor to thousands of small-to-medium sized businesses throughout North America. The consultancy offers a rich portfolio of technology, expertise, and services to help organizations derive value from the transformative effects of technology.

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