

## A.W. HASTINGS & CO.

### Solution Overview

#### Industry

Millwork

#### Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

ePartners, Inc.  
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

#### Scenario

A.W. Hastings & Co. sought a business management solution that would integrate with their custom applications to help streamline business processes and boost customer service efforts. Information is now entered once and flows smoothly from Marvin's Quote and Order Entry systems to Microsoft Business Solutions, where it is instantly available to all users.

#### Company Profile

A.W. Hastings & Co. distributes Marvin and Integrity Windows and Doors, supporting independent retail dealers and industry professionals throughout New England and the northeastern counties of New York.

#### Benefits

The company has improved business processes and attained higher levels of customer service throughout the organization, resulting in a competitive advantage.

#### Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

- Financials
- Inventory and Order Processing
- Customization Tools

Microsoft SQL Server 2000™

Microsoft Windows® 2000 Network

#### Custom applications

- GP Header
- GP View
- GP Helper
- Hastings Orders Made Easy
- Order Queue / AWH Events
- Receiving/Shipping Application
- Service Call Management

#### Demographic Information

Number of Employees: 130

Number of Users: 12

Number of Sites: 2

Transaction Volume: 18,000-

***Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®, along with several custom applications, has helped A.W. Hastings & Co. streamline their business processes and set new standards for customer service excellence.***

Founded in 1854 in Boston, Massachusetts, to supply doors, windows and other millwork products to the building industry, A.W. Hastings & Co. is a family-owned company known for their dedication to customer service.

Now headquartered in Enfield, Connecticut, A.W. Hastings distributes Marvin and Integrity windows and doors, supporting independent retail dealers and industry professionals throughout New England and the northeastern counties of New York. Marvin's window and door products are distinctive by virtue of their "made to order" custom philosophy. This custom approach means that every order is unique and requires innovative services and creative solutions to support A.W. Hastings' corporate vision; "Make it easy to buy Marvin."

A.W. Hastings has distributed Marvin products for more than 20 years. This focus affords A.W. Hastings the opportunity to work closely with their customers to develop a positive experience for the decision makers. Recently, the company constructed a state-of-the-art facility dedicated exclusively to training. A.W. Hastings not only provides education on the Marvin product line for their retail partners, but also on Marvin software tools deployed at retail sites.

To enhance this commitment to customers, A.W. Hastings sought to replace their legacy system with an enterprise-wide solution that would streamline business practices and improve access to information throughout the organization. In addition, the solution needed to interact with Marvin's software, share order, pricing and shipping information with customers and be flexible enough to create integrated, custom software solutions.

A.W. Hastings' commitment to innovation influenced the decision to choose Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains as their business application. Combined with a range of Microsoft applications, tools and custom applications, the solution allows A.W. Hastings to provide a level of customer service that exceeds expectations.

### Ensuring Quality Customer Service

A.W. Hastings' IT team developed several custom applications designed to augment the functionality of the company's solution. One program, GP View, was written using Microsoft Visual Basic and the full complement of Microsoft Web tools. A robust and user-friendly Web lookup/drilldown and reporting tool, GP View ties all sales, purchase, customer, shipping, receiving and routing information together in one place.

AWH Events ensures that customers receive all pertinent order information as soon as possible, in their preferred format, consistently and professionally. Additionally, all information related to sales and purchases is available to team members via a single

screen, providing them the information needed to quickly and accurately answer customer inquiries.

One of the challenges faced in the development of the new business solution was facilitating the rapid yet smooth flow of diverse types of information. Orders are created utilizing Marvin's proprietary software either directly by the A.W. Hastings sales team or received from customers through Microsoft Exchange Server. The order information is then placed utilizing the company's order entry system. From there, the information is integrated via a custom middleware application into the financial solution. The sales order event triggers an acknowledgement that is automatically sent to the customer via e-mail. Order Events gives A.W. Hastings the ability to trigger a notice that is sent to the customer based on criteria such as: expected delivery date, pricing or change orders. These event notifications are tracked in a customer event log.

## Return on investment

A.W. Hastings' investment in Microsoft Business Solutions is paying off in many ways, including:

- **Improved business practices**—Combined with A.W. Hastings' custom applications, the solution has improved the company's business practices. Information is entered only once and flows smoothly from Marvin's proprietary software to the financial system, where it is instantly available to all users. This process is continually documented and the seamless flow of information greatly reduces the opportunity for errors.
- **Enhanced customer service**—Access to a single source of information with the ability to quickly drill down into customer, order, or purchase data enhances the customer service professionals' responsiveness to inquiries.
- **Information for better decisions**—Sales management information is now available in real time. In the past, periodic reports had to be prepared and distributed. Financial management reports are now available in real time, allowing A.W. Hastings' management team to monitor the pulse of the business and quickly spot trends or issues without waiting to receive end-of-period reports.
- **Faster data processing**—All customer paperwork has been developed as a Crystal Report. This provides professional, consistent and easy to read paperwork for their customers. GP Helper generates all customer paperwork by batch or individual number, and creates both a printed and electronic version of the paperwork. This automation is essential as A.W. Hastings' accounting team processes several thousand sales invoices and purchase orders per month.
- **Managing costs and accommodating growth**—A.W. Hastings' solution helps the company manage employee-related costs through increased efficiency. Microsoft Business Solutions reduces the need for additional personnel as A.W. Hastings continues to grow.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit [www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions](http://www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions)

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