



The Ware Group

Johnstone distributor excels with Epicor Eclipse™

Company Facts

- Location: Jacksonville, FL
- Industry: HVAC/R
- Number of Employees: 250
- Web site: www.johnstonewaregroup.com



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Don Livingston, VP of Finance, IT, and HR | The Ware Group

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Support the growth of a Southeast regional Johnstone Supply distributor by improving efficiencies, communication, and customer service.

Solution

- Epicor Eclipse with Wireless Warehouse Management System

Benefits

- Company doubled sales volume over the past 8 years
- 99.99% inventory accuracy
- Sales revenue and profit per employee are 70% higher

The largest distributor in the 118-member/380-store national Johnstone Supply Cooperative, The Ware Group is the leading HVAC/R wholesaler in north and central Florida. Headquartered in Jacksonville, The Ware Group’s 250 employees serve a customer base of residential, commercial, and refrigeration contractors, as well as institutional accounts, across 18 branches in Florida and South Carolina.

According to Don Livingston, Vice President of Finance, IT, and HR, The Ware Group has experienced “fantastic growth” since its founding in 1981. In part, this can be attributed to the distributor’s forward-looking use of the Epicor Eclipse enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. When Livingston joined The Ware Group in 2008, the company had just installed the solution and needed him to drive it. “We have doubled in size over the past eight years, and sales revenue and profit per employee are up by 70 percent with Eclipse,” he states. “The solution allowed employees to change roles, and gave them the ability to provide higher quality information at a faster rate and process more sales orders that are highly accurate.”

In addition, inventory accuracy is much better than with their previous ERP system. “Even with \$25 million in inventory, we pride ourselves on 99.99 percent inventory accuracy,” says Livingston. “That is phenomenal.”

Facilitating external and internal communication

On its Web site, The Ware Group touts the advantages of Epicor Eclipse to its customers:

- Totally integrated real-time system
- Enhanced Purchasing Program to ensure in-stock inventory position
- RF (Radio Frequency) equipment to ensure accuracy of orders
- Online catalog to view all items quickly and efficiently
- Web-based ordering to reduce ordering time
- EDI communication between vendors' and customers' systems and The Ware Group
- Ability to order directly from customers systems into The Ware Group
- Ability to easily receive invoices into customers accounting software
- Enhanced sales analysis to seize sales opportunities by category, vendor, product/SKU
- Enhanced service level reporting to ensure in-stock inventory position
- Quick and efficient shipping and handling of non-stock items

Livingston comments, "We are always looking at efficiencies—are we remaining relevant to the customer, and improving their experience? Eclipse and Epicor are right at the heart of this. In our work with contractors, Epicor Eclipse helps us communicate, and move product and information to them."

For example, customers of The Ware Group can order parts and manage their inventory using a handheld mobile device. In fact, during a recent power outage at one branch, Ware Group employees continued to enter orders into Epicor Eclipse on their mobile devices via Innovo OE Touch.

Within the company, Livingston says, "We want to be transparent, share information across the business, provide frequent metrics, and encourage friendly competition among our branches. We publish data from Eclipse, and our branch managers respond!"

"In addition, we are a seasonal business, with 60 percent of our revenues occurring from May-September," he continues. "Using the Wireless Warehouse Management System, which we have installed in all of our locations, we can ramp up with additional seasonal temporary employees very quickly."

A supportive network

Observes Livingston, "The intelligence network in the Epicor world is unmatched. For growth, we want to partner with a great technology vendor, and Epicor is that for ERP. I think of Epicor as a family—there are some incredibly smart people in Product Management, Professional Services, etc. They complement the great team we have here; it's a collaborative effort to continuously improve the Eclipse solution."

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industries. With more than 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit www.epicor.com.



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