

Northland Fishing Tackle

Improves Processes and Strengthens Profitability with Aptean Distribution ERP



Industry

Sporting goods and Outdoors

Challenges

- » Performance tracking
- » Insight into sales and expenses
- » Visibility into SKUs and inventory costs

Benefits

- » Streamlined warehouse processes
- » Improved reporting efficiencies by 50%
- » Gained full visibility into inventory and backorders
- » Significantly reduced chargebacks

Northland Fishing Tackle, founded in 1975, designs and sells an exclusive line of products for fishing enthusiasts. They are one of the country's leading producers of premium quality jigs, live bait rigs, spinnerbaits and spoons for Panfish, Perch, Walleye, Bass, Trout, Northern Pike and Muskie. The company's ability to continuously release innovative products is fueled by the entire management team, who are all experienced at fishing themselves and have a deep passion for the fishing industry.

However, while their innovative products were flying off the shelves, Northland's distribution system was not keeping pace. The company's supply chain was not fully integrated, and the information they needed to make decisions was not readily available. They realized that to maintain their growth, they needed an integrated back-end supply chain management system that was as strong as their front-end products.

The Need for Accurate Information Drives Change

Northland Fishing Tackle started their search for an enterprise-wide ERP solution with a mind towards finding a solution with a low total cost of ownership. The company was looking for a system that had the ability to provide a fast ROI for its customers so that Northland could quickly see the benefits of upgrading their supply chain software. More specifically, they wanted better tracking of their sales and expenses to better understand how the company was performing.



They sought to track both sales and expenses by customer, product, and salesperson. On the inventory side, they wanted a better way to manage and track their SKUs and inventory costs to gauge their actual costs and total inventory counts.

Aptean Distribution ERP, with its industry-specific functionality, was able to accomplish both of these aspects for Northland as well as deliver new data the company never had access to before. This newfound access to data helped Northland's management team identify how the company was performing on a more granular level. They also decided to host the application with Aptean and have the Aptean team manage their EDI. Both decisions were made to free up internal resources and the knowledge that they could rely on the Aptean Distribution ERP team's expertise to deliver the results they needed.

Implementation Made Easy

Tackle started to become anxious about the implementation process. Their team members had been doing specific processes the same way for many years, and implementing Aptean Distribution ERP meant changing the technology being used as well as the processes themselves.

Thankfully, their anxieties were alleviated, and the implementation process was much smoother than they had imagined. There was a learning curve at first, but after a short time working with project managers, the team found the software easy to use, and everyone is pleased with the progress team members have made. According to Luke Lundt, Northland Fishing Tackle CFO, the Aptean project managers, "Have been great to work with. They were honest, came on site when we needed, returned emails and calls promptly, walked us through processes step by step, and outlined the best ways to use system processes."

Northland Fishing Tackle credits their clear-cut implementation process as part of the reason why they were able to see a fast return on their investment. It allowed Apteian Distribution ERP users to quickly master new processes and improve their efficiency on the job.

After going live, Northland has also found Apteian customer support a useful resource for answering questions and providing assistance.

Rapid Returns and Improvements

In under a year, Apteian Distribution ERP greatly enhanced Northland Fishing Tackle's supply chain and overall business efficiency. They now have access to data that they had never been able to see before. With the help of Apteian project managers, they have updated about 75 percent of their processes ranging from simplifying their UPC code structure to finding a better way to handle product packaging. For the CFO, creating sales and commissions reports is now 50 percent more efficient, which has allowed him to focus extra time on more critical issues.

While the company used to have zero insight into their backorders, they have now seen a 100 percent improvement in backorder visibility. However, their two most significant advances have been in warehouse efficiencies and minimizing chargebacks.

Before implementation, Northland Fishing Tackle was worried that changing over to Apteian Distribution ERP would slow down their picking process because users would have to learn an entirely new system. However, after taking full advantage of the Apteian Distribution ERP warehouse management tools, including integrated

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Luke Lundt, CFO, Northland Fishing Tackle



pre-pack and cartonization rules to maximize picking, they saw rapid enhancements. Within just eight months, they ended up with a 400 percent improvement in warehouse picking efficiency and a 90 percent improvement in inventory accuracy. Now that their warehouse processes are more effective, they are saving a significant amount of money each month in both overhead and inventory costs.

The other significant improvement has been in chargebacks. Northland sold products to major mass merchants and was repeatedly getting hit with chargeback penalties. Frustrated by the lack of options to rectify the situation, they turned to the chargeback management tools found in Apteian Distribution ERP to help measure, track, and recover chargebacks.

After implementing Apteian Distribution ERP, Northland has seen their shipping accuracy improve up to 98 percent, which has helped their retailer relationships and improved their processes and their bottom line. These rapid improvements in warehouse efficiency and chargeback reductions are two of the main reasons why Northland is receiving a fast return on investment from implementing Apteian Distribution ERP.

Overall, said Lundt, “There has been a lot of work and learning through the implementation. The key is that Aptean Distribution improved our processes and saved us money. A truly great improvement from where we were just eight months ago.”

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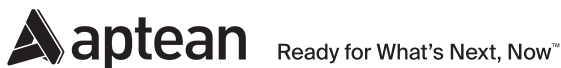
Luke Lundt, CFO, Northland Fishing Tackle



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