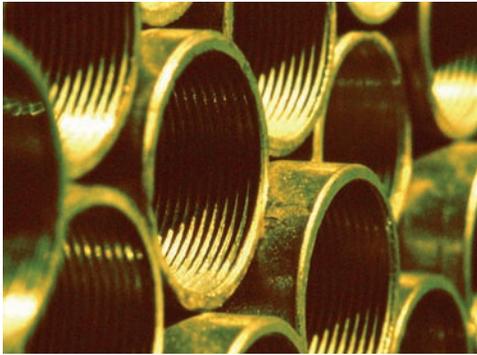


Merit Brass



customer success story
discrete manufacturing

→ “We chose **Infor** over all the competitors based on its **support system and its ability to grow with us on a global scale.**”

Ed Waters

Vice President and Director of Operations

Reducing Costs While Increasing Customer Satisfaction

Infor Manufacturing Essentials addresses pipe fitting and valve manufacturers' global and domestic business issues including order accuracy, response time and customer satisfaction.

The Company

Merit Brass is America's leading manufacturer of stainless-steel, brass, chrome-plated-brass and aluminum pipe nipples and is a major distributor in the pipe, fitting and valve industry. Merit Brass' 225 employees serve customers in the United States and Canada from its headquarters in Cleveland, OH, as well as from distribution centers in Dallas, Texas and Sparks, Nev. The company manufactures and distributes products for a broad range of industries, from chemical, paper and wastewater treatment to pharmaceutical, computer, aerospace, marine and original-equipment manufacturers. Merit Brass is very customer-service oriented, with ISO 9001:2000 certification that emphasizes measurement and communication of customer satisfaction.

The Situation

Merit Brass' industry has evolved dramatically from global competition, requiring manufacturers to be highly flexible and responsive to changes in the costs of materials and the needs of customers. Over a recent one-to-two-year period, for example, the price of the alloys used by this industry has soared 20 to 50 percent. Moreover, American-based producers like Merit Brass face increasing pressures from fierce competition from China and the rest of Asia.

To survive and flourish in the new global economy, Merit Brass has dedicated itself to driving world class processes, continuously improving products and techniques, evolving with the marketplace and catering to the global product demands. As part of this dedication, the company has reached out and developed a network of suppliers across Asia, using their global access as a competitive edge. Merit Brass relies on its technology department to lead this environment of change and expand its business overseas.

In the late 1990s, Merit Brass was functioning with a number of manual systems, including EDI orders, that were subject to costly errors and was not able to be as responsive to customer needs as it wanted to be. The company's management sought out an enterprise resource planning system that would automate its processes, provide high visibility into its customer data and inventory and enable it to reduce costs significantly while enhancing customer service.



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**Ed Waters
Vice President and Director of Operations**

The Solution

The company selected Infor ERP SyteLine 6 as the best technology to help it compete in the global marketplace.

“We chose Infor over all the competitors based on its support system and its ability to grow with us on a global scale,” recounts Merit Brass vice president and director of operations, Ed Waters. “Unlike our previous solution, Infor gave us the ability to better communicate with our customers and suppliers, both global and domestic.”

Between 1999 and 2005, the Infor solution made a tremendous impact on Merit Brass. Waters notes, “Since implementing Infor solutions, we’ve seen an increase in our productivity, our serviceability and our ability to forecast, all with a decrease in personnel.”

Real Results

Infor has made a substantive difference in the global operations of Merit Brass. At the time of implementing Infor technology in 1999, Merit was a \$40 million business. By 2005, Infor ERP SyteLine had enabled the company to expand to \$72 million.

EDI order accuracy has improved to 98 percent, with 23 percent fewer errors than the company’s previous manual system. Each error cost the company about \$75; and, with 400 orders a day, accuracy meant considerable cost savings. Furthermore, EDI has exceeded the expectations of the company’s customers, allowing them to automate their manual order/purchase order process with Merit Brass.

Customer service gains have been remarkable. Infor ERP SyteLine has made easy-to-navigate estimate screens, and response time for customer service and sales has improved by 13 percent, with much greater accuracy. This efficiency improvement allowed Merit’s staff to broaden their capabilities to multi-task and to manage more customer requests. Using the SyteLine Customer Center, which automates order entry over the Internet, Merit has been able to reduce customer service calls by 12 percent. The resulting savings in time and resources has meant significant reductions in operational costs within the customer-service area, while improving the customer experience by allowing customers to check the status of their orders online. Order verification for some 400 orders a day worldwide is now carried out by e-mail instead of the earlier labor-intensive system involving paper, phone calls and faxes to customers.

With Infor ERP SyteLine, Merit now can view stock levels in real time. As a result, it has reduced cycle time to 2.5 weeks from the previous four weeks and has improved order processing time by 33 percent. Infor ERP SyteLine’s forecasting abilities have permitted Merit to reduce inventory. And by further establishing relationships with global suppliers, Merit now has faster and more economical access to the supplies it needs to meet its customers’ expectations.



focus on essentials



“I see our relationship with Infor evolving in a very positive way...that will continue to help us remain competitive in a very competitive commodity global market.”

Ed Waters
Vice President and Director of Operations

Merit Brass has gained improvements throughout its operational processes using Infor solutions. Management now considers timely performance and inventory measurements to make operational decisions. Modules for routings and bill of materials support the company's planning, providing more accurate information by individual operation on the production floor. Potential material shortages are spotted more easily, costing of manufactured product is more accurate and information is more readily available. Infor ERP SyteLine's forecasting module helps estimate sales of stock items and even allows the company to plan for items with no sales history, tracking item sales by individual customers.

Infor solutions have generated real results for Merit Brass, with real savings:

- An 80 percent growth in revenue over six years
- Improvement in order accuracy to 98 percent
- 23 percent fewer errors on EDI orders
- A 13 percent improvement in response time for customer service
- A 12 percent reduction in customer service calls
- Improvement in order processing time by 33 percent
- A 37 percent reduction in cycle time, to 2.5 weeks from four weeks
- Heightened customer satisfaction by providing access to order status via the Web

“I see our relationship with Infor evolving in a very positive way,” Waters predicts. “It continues to source solutions in the technology world, and that will continue to help us remain competitive in a very competitive commodity global market.”



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