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Editorial Contact:  
Gary Blum, 914 684-1790  
[gblum@thelaurusgrp.com](mailto:gblum@thelaurusgrp.com)  
Pictures Attached.

## **Clement Uses Technology to Keep a *Killer* at Bay**

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Headquartered in San Jose, California, Clement Support Services is one of the largest stocking distributors of anchors, braces and guides for pipe. Bay area plumbers and mechanical contractors depend upon them to have what they need when they need it on the jobsite. "All our employees wear T-shirts that say 'Life's Too Short for Back Orders', said Tony Clement, President of Clement Support Services, "Back orders will kill you...if it takes us more than 2 seconds to locate a part in inventory and promise it for same or next day delivery we've lost that customer."

Back in 2005, when Clement migrated to FDS a fully-integrated, customizable business software solution developed specifically for the fastener industry, the word quickly spread among contractors that if they needed anything to do with pipe, Clement was the one to call first. "Before we changed over to FDS, from Real World, we were using a terminal based program that allowed us to do the basics: inventory, billing and purchasing but all we really had were a bunch of numbers that didn't relate to anything," said Tony. "Now we are able to tell our customers instantly what we have in stock, and if it isn't in stock how quickly we can get it, all by looking at a single screen."

Clement has posters throughout their offices reminding their employees that "item inquiry is your best friend". As Tony explained, "With the item inquiry screen, we can find out anything we need to know in less than 2 seconds...and that not only keep us alive, it helps us grow our business!" After being fully trained on the system, Clement was able to reduce back orders to near zero and accurately forecast buying trends, patterns, and specific client needs. Clement's inventory doubled, but so did the number of turns for each SKU. "As quickly as product comes in, is as quickly as it goes out. We have nothing collecting dust like we used to." said Tony. With FDS, one key benefit for Clement is they are better able to control inventory costs. "Today we have over 35,000 square feet of warehousing broken between our two locations in San Jose and Sacramento California. Without FDS we would still be working blindly out of our original 10,000 square foot warehouse." Axiom Software enabled Clement to better satisfy their customers' desires and maintain tighter inventory requirements by supplying up-to-the minute inventory management reports and forecasts. "Because of this, our margins are better and we better equipped to handle spikes in sales during the year." Tony explained.

Another advantage Clement has using FDS over his competitors, is that the executives along with the sales force are no longer tethered to their computers. They are able to securely access information and enter orders using a secure portal from anywhere there's an internet connection. "I can be anywhere in the world, and as long as I have internet access, I can log in and still be connected to the company," says Tony. Sales people can be on one sales call and react within seconds, if another client has an emergency.

For many companies in the fastener industry, such as Clement, transitioning to a new business software program can be disruptive and take office personnel away from their duties to learn how to use the new software. Horror stories are not uncommon especially for those companies that purchase software that doesn't include onsite training. Internet-based training, despite being pitched as less expensive and less disruptive because it enables employees to learn at their own pace; often results in substantially longer transition periods and greater disruption. "On a scale between 1 and 10, as it relates to being disruptive, I'd say the experience was a 3 and that was mostly our fault for giving Axiom faulty inventory data," explained Tony. "One of the main benefits we got by going with Axiom Software was the personal touch."

After being trained by the people that actually did the installation, everyone, from the workers in the warehouse to the people in the front office, was able to use the software. "If I don't get something or there's a problem, I can pick up the phone and reach someone knowledgeable I'm not transferred overseas or into a voice prompt system," added Tony.

Choosing FDS was not a rash decision especially since this was going to be Clement's final software change. The executives at Clement spent several months doing their research and reviewed various software packages including, Great Plains, Navision, Prophet 21 and The Business Edge, before finally deciding upon Axiom Software's FDS. "The software offered more for less, they understood our business more and there was good chemistry...they had an understanding that this was a life and death decision." said Tony.

**About Clement Support:** Founded in 1990, Clement is a privately held corporation dedicated to distributing parts that hang, support, brace and anchor pipe to plumber and mechanical contractors in the Bay area. To learn more about Clement please visit their website [www.clementsupport.com](http://www.clementsupport.com)

**About Axiom Software:** Axiom Software, headquartered in New York, is one of the leading developers of custom software and critical enterprise applications for specific industry segments, such as fastener and electronic distribution. To learn more, please visit [www.axiomsw.com](http://www.axiomsw.com)

