



At a Glance

Wild Planet Toys, Inc.

Industry

Innovative Toy Manufacturer

Headquarters

San Francisco, CA

Number of Employees

50

Logistics

Up to 300 orders per day

Solution

Epicor for Distribution

Business Challenge

Inefficient manual ship-fill process was error-prone, created inefficiencies and wasted resources

Solution

Integrated distribution solution providing improved order fulfillment, support for EDI, and more accurate reporting

Business Benefits

- Increased the accuracy and reduced the cycle time of the ship-fill process
- Improved cash flow through next day invoicing
- Reduction in the time required to perform selection and matching of stock to orders
- Improved management decision-making process by greatly increasing the volume, accuracy and timeliness of the available information

Return on Investment

- Saving one to three man-hours per day in ship-fill process
- Reduced the elapsed time of receipt of order to distribution from over a day to one to two hours

Wild Planet Toys, Inc. was founded in 1993 with the mission to create quality products that spark the imagination and provide positive experiences without relying on violence. During its busy season, which runs from August through January, the company typically receives 300 orders a day from large retailers such as Wal-Mart, Toys'R'Us, and Target as well as a wide range of smaller stores. The company needed an integrated distribution solution that would provide improved order fulfillment, support for electronic data interchange (EDI) and more accurate reporting.

In the past, orders were entered and then a report was printed of all outstanding orders, including those that had been held over from previous days because stock wasn't available. Another report was then printed with available inventory at Orion Logistics, Wild Planet's 3PL. A group of clerks would compare the reports, select orders for shipment and enter them into the distribution module manually. The same manual, multi-person task had to be completed the next day, when the shipment report came back from the 3PL. Errors frequently arose during this manual process, especially when two clerks accidentally each prepared the same order for shipment.

According to Steve Revere, Vice President of Information Technology, the most critical criteria for the new solution was that it be equally strong in both accounting and distribution functionality. "I looked at all the major midmarket brands, and Epicor was the only one that met our needs in both areas," he said. "Epicor for Distribution offers capabilities far beyond what I saw in other packages such as the ability to automate the entire order entry process, including orders, shipping and returns. Epicor also offered the services of their consulting team to meet several company specific requirements that no packages were able to handle off the shelf."

Increasing Accuracy and Reducing Cycle Time

According to Revere, Epicor for Distribution has streamlined every aspect of the ship-fill process. Now, the process begins by sorting orders according to specified criteria. Epicor for Distribution matches the orders to available inventory according to the selected criteria, for example, customers that don't meet Wild Planet's credit requirements are automatically avoided.

Once satisfied with the selection, the clerks simply push a button and Epicor for Distribution generates a file that Wild Planet sends to its 3PL. When the 3PL sends back the file of the actual shipments, Wild Planet imports it into Epicor for Distribution and it automatically matches up the shipments against the outstanding orders. "The errors that frequently happened with the previous manual process meant that we were never entirely sure what we had in stock," said Revere. "The result was that we would send orders to the 3PL that couldn't be filled and would end up with 40 partially filled orders sitting in the staging area and no idea when they would ship."

The solution has enabled Wild Planet to tell its customers exactly when they can expect to receive merchandise. "Epicor for Distribution provides a nearly error-free process that has helped to increase our fill rate by 40% to 85%," said Revere. "And the additional speed of the automated process has improved our cash flow. Instead of waiting two days for the order to be shipped and another week for the invoice to reach the customer, in most cases we now ship the order and deliver the invoice electronically to the customer by the next business day."

Epicor for Distribution has also aided the management decision-making process by greatly increasing the volume, accuracy and timeliness of the available information. "We weren't always able to get accurate information out of the old software," Revere said. "For example, we would run a sales-by-rep report and then run a sales-by-customer report for that rep's customers and get a different number and it was very difficult to understand why. Now the reports are all coming out accurate using Crystal Decisions - Seagate Info Desktop 7.5, which easily integrates with Epicor for Distribution."

Customization Aids Streamlining Effort

Wild Planet made an important modification to the ship-fill feature that adds a range dialog window to the calculate function. Now, when users start the ship-fill process and select the calculate button, they are prompted with a pop-up dialog form that lets them filter and sort orders by several criteria including order number range, customer code, price class, item code and territory.

"Automating what used to be very tedious manual tasks has saved us approximately one to three man-hours per day, making it possible to handle a very large increase in volume with only a small increase in staff."

"The reduction in the time required to perform selection and matching with Epicor for Distribution has provided dramatic time and cost savings, making it possible to accommodate our rapid growth with only a minimal staffing increase,"

Steve Revere,
Wild Planet Toys, Inc.

About Epicor

For 20 years, Epicor has been a recognized leader dedicated to providing integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM) and supply chain management (SCM) software solutions to midmarket companies around the world. With the recent acquisition of Scala, Epicor is a global leader in the midmarket serving over 20,000 customers in over 140 countries.



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