



OW Lee Company

Finds new efficiencies with Epicor ERP™

Company Facts

- Location: Ontario, California
- Industry: Specialty Outdoor Furniture Manufacturer
- Web site: www.owlee.com



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Leisa McCollister, product marketing and ERP implementation project manager | OW Lee

An American family tradition, OW Lee Company was established in Pasadena, California, by Oddist W. Lee in 1947 as a wrought-iron gate manufacturer for the luxurious estates of Southern California. Due to increased requests from local patio furniture store owners, Oddist began to design and sell high-end patio furniture directly. In 1954, Oddist incorporated under the name OW Lee Company. Now, more than 60 years later and through three generations, the family-owned company has maintained its dedication to the design and production of fine, handcrafted casual outdoor furniture.

From its manufacturing facility in Ontario, California, the company uses state-of-the-art equipment to produce over 300 furniture frames per day sold exclusively through its network of specialty patio retailers.

The Business Situation

OW Lee's production environment fits somewhere in between a mass manufacturer with heavily stocked inventory and highly-custom engineering. OW Lee is a special order company but they mass produce, meaning their customers provide a purchase order for one standard set of furniture, but they can choose from 500+ fabric colors, furniture finishing, and other design options. OW Lee relies on the next-generation Epicor ERP solution to organize “like orders” before products go into production, and therefore achieve more efficient (and profitable) manufacturing outcomes.

Success Highlights

Challenges

- A plan to gain real-time visibility into inventory, purchasing and production—among other efficiencies—led OW Lee to search for a modern business software solution

Solution

- Epicor ERP

Benefits

- Reached continuous improvements in key areas such as inventory, purchasing, order entry, and production
- Achieved a more efficient production environment with the help of a custom-built aggregator tool that organizes jobs by like materials
- Simplified the process of creating and tracking made-to-order products with a custom-built configurator tool



The Epicor ERP solution immediately enabled better control and visibility into key areas such as inventory, purchasing, order entry, production, engineering, and accounting. “Prior to Epicor ERP we were running our business on an AS400, which we used for everything except payroll, but it didn’t provide the visibility that we needed,” says Leisa McCollister, product marketing manager for OW Lee and the Epicor ERP implementation project manager and team leader.

Partnering for Success

OW Lee worked with Cre8tive Technology and Design, a member of the Epicor Inspired Partner Network and provider of business software solutions and services, to select, implement, and train on the Epicor ERP solution. Because of OW Lee’s unique manufacturing environment, the company leveraged the Epicor tools to extend the solution to meet their needs with the help of Cre8tive Technology and Design:

“We developed what we call the ‘aggregator’ tool which takes individual Epicor jobs and aggregates them at different points in the production process by like materials,” explains McCollister. “Parts operations will have a completely different set of production paperwork than finishing operations based upon the like items. This has been a tremendous help as we used to create this paperwork manually outside of the system.”

Another example is developing a custom configurator to simplify the process of creating and tracking made-to-order products: “Before Epicor we had to create a configuration for every single part, and we have more than 1,000 different parts,” says McCollister. “The process took forever so we brainstormed an alternative with Cre8tive Technology and Design. The configurator we built calculates the weight of a product, so if you order the furniture with a cushion the weight is automatically added. It also adds labor, such as adding fringe to a pillow—this will take longer so the labor is adjusted. It’s a very comprehensive and sophisticated configurator that we couldn’t have built without the experience and expertise of Cre8tive Technology and Design.”

“We worked very closely with the OW Lee team to make this project a success,” says Aaron Continelli, president and founder of Cre8tive Technology and Design. “Epicor ERP is a highly flexible and scalable solution which enabled us to easily configure the system to meet OW Lee’s specific needs. As a dedicated ERP partner, our goal is to provide our customers with solutions that will make their businesses more successful and efficient as well as ensure they get the most value from their ERP investment.”

Key Success Areas

For OW Lee the top three areas of achievement using the Epicor ERP system include:

- Accurate and efficient inventory purchasing and management. Epicor ERP enables OW Lee to keep inventory in the right quantity at the right time
- Intuitive Windows-based tool for order entry. The speed and ease of processing orders is a lot faster with Epicor ERP
- Staying competitive with better costing

“Improving our costing was critical to our pricing strategy,” adds McCollister. “In our legacy AS400 system we could only see margins by the product groups. We could tell that a product group in general was performing well, but now with Epicor we can run reports and look at each individual project. It was eye opening to see that some products were priced too low or too high and yet the overall picture still looked normal. In the Epicor ERP system we can break a product down part by part. This gives us the accurate information that we need in order to make changes in our pricing which allows us to be more profitable.”

Another key to remaining competitive was utilizing a comprehensive bill of materials to better manage custom projects with OW Lee’s larger customers, like Disney and Marriott. The ability to match a standard product bill of materials with custom requirements using the Epicor ERP system, and provide real-time product pricing, makes doing business with OW Lee easier.

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Conclusion

“Once we implemented Epicor ERP we immediately benefitted from better visibility and real-time access to information – the system is very intuitive and easy to navigate,” says McCollister. “Partnering with Cre8tive Technology and Design was the catalyst to getting the system up and running smoothly. We needed more in-depth customizations and Cre8tive Technology and Design really understood how to match the system to our unique requirements.”

About Cre8tive Technology and Design

Cre8tive Technology and Design is a member of the Epicor Inspired Partner Network as an Epicor Platinum Partner. Cre8tive Technology and Design has earned this recognition due to their ability to effectively sell and implement Epicor ERP solutions. Cre8tive Technology and Design also helps customers customize their Epicor ERP solution to match their business model and their specific challenges. Since business needs evolve as businesses grow or change, Cre8tive Technology and Design makes sure their Epicor software solution provides both flexibility and adaptability. For more information, visit www.ctnd.com. Follow Cre8tive Technology and Design on Twitter® @Cre8tiveTechs and on LinkedIn®.

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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