Indiana Limestone Company

Manufacturer improves processing times with ERP upgrade

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INTRODUCTION

As technology continues to grow, many companies find themselves relying on increasingly outdated enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, often even operating on disparate outdated systems or machinery.

INDIANA LIMESTONE COMPANY

Indiana Limestone Company (Indiana Limestone) is a large stone quarry with multiple sites and multiple manufacturing facilities. Headquartered in Bloomington, IN, it has provided building materials for several state capitals, monuments, and some of the most prestigious skyscrapers around the world. Indiana Limestone extracts dimensional stone and sells to customers around the world.

CHALLENGE

Indiana Limestone operated for many years on disparate outdated systems for accounting, sales, manufacturing, and warehouse operations. For accounting and finished goods orders, it utilized an old version of Dynamics NAV that could only be supported on Windows XP virtual machines. It used manual spreadsheets for its slab selling operations. For warehousing and manufacturing, it used a custom built system written in an outdated coding language. Prior to upgrading its ERP, the material resource planning system Indiana Limestone used was entirely manual.

What makes Indiana Limestone unique is that every block of stone that is quarried is carefully graded and tracked throughout the entire manufacturing and sales process. Stone is also sold by the net cubic footage whether it is sold as a large block or individually sawn slabs. Indiana Limestone's finished good lines create standard repeatable products sold by the pallet or pound. Since limestone is a natural product, the manufacturing technology solution needed to be flexible enough to accommodate alternate unintended products resulting from the sawing process (i.e., a different color or quality grade in the produced slab). The warehousing solution also needed to be powerful and simple enough to aide a non-technical workforce with their daily tasks.

Indiana Limestone's challenge was to replace its outdated, largely manual ERP processes with an integrated system that would improve its resource planning system as well as support the growth the company foresees in the coming years.

While evaluating potential solutions, Indiana Limestone was looking for a few key deliverables:

- The solution must consolidate its outdated and disparate systems.
- The solution should add the capability to use MRP for operations planning.
- The solution would need to support Indiana Limestone's unique manufacturing and warehouse processes.

ENVISTA'S SOLUTION

Indiana Limestone chose enVista because it felt that enVista understood the business and industry and could deliver the most appropriate solution. enVista's recommendations and pledge to be with Indiana Limestone from the point of engagement through the life of the project also proved

determinative. "What sold enVista for us the most was their customer references," said Indiana Limestone CFO Matt Howard. "I got a good sense that their technical depth was among the best that we were looking into."

enVista provided a completely cloud hosted Microsoft Dynamics® AX 2012 R3 (Dynamics AX) solution. A cloud hosted solution was recommended to relieve the burden that would be placed on Indiana Limestone's minimal IT staff. Wireless RF devices and additional wireless infrastructure was also implemented across all indoor and outdoor facilities to ensure connection to Dynamics AX. A process manufacturing approach with planning items and co-products was implemented to address the MRP and manufacturing flexibility requirement. R3 Advanced Warehousing concepts were also implemented to provide consistent, repeatable processes for the workforce and daily transactions. In addition to the standard Dynamics AX product, customizations for their quarry and mill operations were built by enVista developers to accelerate processing times and adapt Dynamics AX to Indiana Limestone's unique requirements.

enVista was able to customize the Dynamics AX system in order to expedite certain processes. For instance, enVista was able to accelerate certain transactions that Indiana Limestone used frequently so it could complete them more quickly. A utility using the warehouse management module was created to replace their manual stone grader sheet. Prior to the implementation, the grader graded every block by hand and took measurements. The handwritten stone grader sheet would then go to another person who would decide batch attributes and then manually enter data into the system. enVista built a tool where the grader can use a tablet for entering measurements instead of handwriting the measurements. A custom process will then evaluate the entered measurements and determine the item number to be assigned, register the appropriate batch number to the item number, register the appropriate batch attributes against the item/batch combination, and perform the appropriate inventory adjustment to create the stone in Dynamics AX.

RESULTS

A nine month enVista implementation yielded a successful Dynamics AX solution that either met or exceeded each of Indiana Limestone's requirements. Processing times in Indiana Limestone's mill areas are faster now than with its prior custom built legacy system. The MRP system has given the operations team greater insight into how to better manage the business. The Dynamics AX platform is also robust enough to accommodate future acquisitions of additional quarries. Indiana Limestone has also experienced significant improvements in the efficiency of back office tasks. AR/AP financial reporting close cycle has gone from 18 days down to 8 days. "The company has benefited greatly because we have stability in our production system now," said Indiana Limestone CFO Matt Howard.

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