

Equation Technologies Lights Up Productivity with Integration at FOCUS Industries

Integrations and Sage CRM implementation help FOCUS Industries streamline their systems, reduce errors, increase customer satisfaction and improve employee productivity.

FOCUS Industries, Inc. has been manufacturing high-end lighting fixtures since 1989. With several moves to increasingly larger facilities, as well as opening four distribution centers across the country and selling to customers across the globe, FOCUS' business grew tremendously over the last decade. Keeping up with current lamp technology, fixture performance and design, maintenance issues and power delivery systems, FOCUS is dedicated to value engineering, and giving customers the best products at a competitive cost. In order to keep up with their 10-15% growth rate year after year, FOCUS needed to upgrade their antiquated DOS-based accounting system and they needed to find a partner to help them with the transition.

System Limitations

Limited in the number of users who could be in the system simultaneously to accommodate growth, along with being tied to older technology and lack of flexibility, FOCUS began their search for a new system led by Frank Ash, director of operations. "We also needed manufacturing capabilities to replace the spreadsheets and manual systems that we were currently using," said Frank. It was difficult for FOCUS to determine correct gross profit margins due to lack of integration of manufacturing processes with the accounting system. Another area that was important for FOCUS to track was alternate vendors and keep up with various pricing from all their vendors. Planning and forecasting was another opportunity for improvement as data could not be easily exported out of the old system.

Finding the Right Partner

"Initially we worked with another company for our Sage 300 ERP implementation," said

Frank. "Unfortunately they lacked services that we needed." FOCUS needed a partner with significant experience integrating and customizing systems as well as working with growing companies. "We met Equation and instantly felt comfortable that they would be able to help us. Equation asked all the right questions and I could tell we were on the same page in terms of making us more efficient," said Frank. "Most companies would have come and told us how to do things instead of listening to us and coming up with ideas together to improve our work flow."

Implementation Yields Efficiency

"Equation came in and fixed everything the way we wanted it," said Frank. "Where we really saw a lot of productivity gain is when we were able to integrate the manufacturing and bar code pieces. We sell about 50,000 boxes of lighting fixtures each month. We used to have to bar code these manually. Equation was able to completely automate this process for us. We look to Equation to help us make our entire business more efficient every day."

Value of Working with Equation Technologies

- Automated bar code process
- Integrated manufacturing system with accounting
- High level of knowledge and they understand of our business
- Improved customer satisfaction due to more accurate orders
- Reduced data entry time as duplicate entry is eliminated
- Streamlined commission tracking which resulted in tremendous time savings



FOCUS

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

"We have a culture of constant improvement at FOCUS and wanted a partner who complemented that. When we met with Equation, they asked all the right questions. We knew they were listening to what we needed and how our business worked."

*— Frank Ash
FOCUS Landscape Lighting,
Director of Operations*

Improved Customer Satisfaction with Integration

With 25 employees in capacities spanning accounting, manufacturing and inventory working in the system, there were many other opportunities for improved productivity that Equation helped with. The bar code system was now integrated, which reduced data entry errors significantly. "Since the information is pulled from the inventory system, we don't have spelling errors on our labels, which resulted in wasted resources," said Frank. The integration with the UPS shipping system enabled FOCUS to reduce shipping errors to almost nothing, which saved tremendous amount of cost in terms of returned orders and the reduction of one full-time person in that department. In addition they were able to save time since there was not duplicate entry of customer shipping information. "We have happier customers because our systems are completely integrated and have zero errors," said Frank. "The system does not allow us to make errors."

FOCUS has benefited significantly from the integration work and relationship with Equation Technologies. Kasey Keller, technical services manager, no longer wades through enormous amounts of paperwork to locate transactions. Instead he accesses the system and is able to quickly put his hands on the information he needs. Kasey is able to concentrate on other aspects of his job and in turn is more productive.

CRM System Rounds Out Solution

Another area of the business that needed some attention was with maintaining customer, prospect and marketing information. Again, FOCUS turned to Equation for help. Sage CRM was recommended and the implementation began along with more integration work. "We did not have any type of contact management system beforehand,"

said Frank. "It was important for us to know who we needed to market to at a branch level for our customers. The data we have typically used came from our accounting system, which did not provide enough contact information to market effectively. Equation helped us develop our CRM system from the ground up so it fulfilled our specific needs."

Equation wrote some customization pieces for the CRM system as well. "Our owner likes to have the information he needs in the format he wants at his fingertips," said Frank. "With the customizations, he has all of this information and is able to make quicker, better business decisions."

"We have more than 90 field-based salespeople who require monthly reports and copies of all of their invoices. We used to spend days gathering the information for the reports, putting in folders and shipping to the salespeople," said Frank. "Now that we are automated, this process has been reduced to just three hours and we can email so much more instead of mailing the items."

"FOCUS Industries is so much better because of our relationship with Equation. The amount of integration and automation work they have done with us is amazing. We are definitely a more productive and stronger company," said Frank.



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