Kissing Paperwork Goodbye:
Smithbilt Embraces Efficiency with NetSuite

For the last 42 years, Smithbilt Industries, Inc., has been producing quality backyard storage buildings for customers nationwide. Based in Auburndale, Fla., the family-owned company prides itself in being "American Made" and ranks as one of the top 10 national manufacturers in the portable storage building industry.

What started out as a very small operation with just a handful of employees has grown into a 60-employee manufacturing firm that has multiple factories and offices throughout the state of Florida.

Similar to most growing companies, Smithbilt has faced technology challenges in recent years. The company's technology needs changed as it expanded into new markets, added new products and hired new associates. It was previously using Sage and wanted to trade up to a cloud-based platform with automated cost accounting capabilities. The manufacturer was also using many different manual processes and spreadsheets to run its thriving business.

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More specifically, Smithbilt needed an effective cost accounting system for its warehouse operations. "We were overrun with the process of manually counting inventory, keeping up with materials that were coming in and maintaining accurate inventory counts," says Melissa Smith, office manager. "We just needed the tools that would help us eliminate paper, basically, and successfully pass the company on to the next generation."

Leveraging the Power of NetSuite

After evaluating various enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions, Smithbilt's leadership team decided that NetSuite was the right fit for their growing enterprise. Smith says NetSuite's roles-based architecture and robust accounting controls were compelling for a company that was hiring a growing number of non-family-member employees.

"We were adding people outside of the family in the accounting department and needed a system that would give us more control over the 'checks and balances' and would also help us delegate as we grew," says Smith. "NetSuite seemed like the right fit for us for all of those reasons."

Getting a Good Grasp on the System

Smithbilt's first step was to start using its new ERP in the office, where family members had a chance to "get a good grasp" on the new system before releasing it to the rest of the company. Some of the customizations that NetSuite Implementation Partner GSI, Inc., provided included the integration of a website configurator that enables a smooth order-to-cash transaction process.

Smith says security is a priority for Smithbilt, which is using its new ERP to give its customers a very secure payment processing experience. The manufacturer is also using the ERP developer's SuiteCare program for ongoing integration and continuous improvement support, plus Avalara's tax software for seamless tax management.

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"Using the website configurator, secure transactions and SuiteCare, we're able to prioritize efficiency for our valued customers," says Smith. The company is also using a website configurator to design custom sheds for its companies. The design flows through NetSuite, which generates a detailed sales order with custom materials.

"This leads to efficient component ordering for our light manufacturing," Smith adds, "plus streamlined order-to-cash and secure-to-pay processes."

The Right Implementation Partner

Smithbilt was introduced to GSI by the manufacturer's CPA, who suggested the company work with the full-service IT provider to implement NetSuite. "Our CPA recommended we reach out to GSI and take a look," says Smith. "He's the one who brought us to GSI, which we ultimately selected as our NetSuite implementation partner."

Along with most of NetSuite's native functionalities, Smithbilt is also using an integrated inventory management solution that GSI designed. This was an important win for Smithbilt, which has to itemize a large number of parts that are used to build one specific building or shed.

If, for example, the manufacturer only needs one section of a 2X4 to make a part, the company needed to be able to count that without creating waste or adding extra cost to the project.

"The GSI team was great at listening to the process and helping us figure that out," says Smith. "Their expertise in that area was incredible. They helped us figure out how to assign item numbers and count the parts accurately."

Manufacturing & Customer Service Reimagined

With its new ERP in place, Smithbilt has been able to automate many processes that were both laborious and time-intensive. It can also deliver a more streamlined buying experience for its customers, who can now "mock design" sheds right on the manufacturer's website. Once the design is approved, NetSuite steps in and handles the process from order-to-cash.

"That was really our out-of-the-box NetSuite project that we've been working on for about a year," says Smith. "That also ties into our goal of getting away from so many manual processes and instead just having the customer go online, build their shed and send it to us. When we just push a button to send the order to manufacturing, it feeds right into NetSuite."

A Roadmap for Success

Right now, Smith is looking forward to Smithbilt's fiscal year-end, at which point she'll be able to see exactly how NetSuite has positively impacted the company's operations, financial department and bottom line.

Going forward, she says the company plans to continue working with GSI to optimize the ERP and ensure that Smithbilt is getting the best possible ROI from its technology investment.

"We would definitely recommend GSI as an implementation partner for companies that are trying to achieve goals similar to ours," Smith says, "and we would definitely trust them to handle our future projects."

For more information:

Contact us today to learn more. You can also email us or call (855) 474-4377.

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Why GSI?

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