Westborn Market's Rise to Specialty Retail Success

Founded in 1963, Westborn Market began as a humble, single-location store in Metro Detroit. Over the years, it has grown into a thriving business with four locations across Southeast Michigan. The company positions itself as a high-end specialty retailer offering a variety of grocery items, floral products, and other specialty foods. Ken Lundberg, CFO of Westborn Market, highlights their market niche: "More high-end, specialty retailer for grocery, prepared foods, floral prep, those kinds of things." Their focus on quality and customer service has helped them stand out in a competitive region.

With decades of experience in the industry, the company hit a pivotal moment—recognizing the need for advanced tools to manage its expanding operations with greater efficiency. This realization sparked a search for a robust ERP system, leading them to choose NetSuite and partner with GSI to turn their vision into reality.

Out with the Old, In with the Cloud

Westborn Market's move to NetSuite wasn't triggered by glaring technical issues—it was about a growing company realizing it needed better tools to match its expanding demands. Before adopting NetSuite, Westborn's inventory and financial management systems simply couldn't keep up. Ken explains it best: "We needed better inventory and financials... the ability to slice and dice data quickly. Good reporting."

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Company: Westborn Market

Industry: Retail, Grocery

Location: Headquarters in Livonia, Michigan

About the Company:
For over 50 years, Westborn Market has been a cornerstone of Southeastern Michigan, offering the freshest produce, gourmet groceries, fine wines, and more. From catering to floral design, they provide top-tier services while proudly supporting local nonprofits to strengthen the Detroit community.

System Replaced: Microsoft GP
Solution: NetSuite Implementation

As Westborn Market set its sights on modernizing, NetSuite's cloud-based advantages stood out—particularly for managing inventory and financials. Ken recalls: "I had heard of NetSuite for 20 years... I knew they were first in the cloud for accounting software." After weighing their options, including a Microsoft product, they chose NetSuite, not just for its power but also for its affordability. "Your hourly rates were much cheaper... the original estimated cost was cheaper than going to the Microsoft product."

Setting the Wheels in Motion & Early Wins with NetSuite

When Westborn Market decided to adopt NetSuite as their ERP solution, they knew the right implementation partner was just as crucial as the software itself. Ken puts it simply: "I wanted someone with a local presence, which Ryan offered as the project manager near our Berkley store. I wanted boots on the ground." This wasn't just a nice-to-have—it was a non-negotiable need for hands-on, immediate support that would make all the difference in their successful implementation. And GSI delivered.

The transition to NetSuite wasn't a walk in the park. The implementation was split into phases, starting with the challenge of shifting their inventory methodologies from manual to automated. It wasn't easy, but they kept their eyes on the prize, and progress was made. As Ken puts it, "We're not 100% where we need to be yet, but this is phase one of moving to that."

Even in these early stages, Westborn Market was already seeing the fruits of their labor, getting acquainted with NetSuite's reporting and inventory systems. "We just set up new reports... now we're verifying stuff. We do our first inventory," says Ken—proof that the hard work was paying off.

What really set the implementation apart was GSI's transparent and structured communication. "I like the fact that you have weekly meetings," says Ken, emphasizing how critical these meetings were in keeping everything on track. Week after week, the team reviewed tasks, budgets, and deliverables—ensuring no stone was left unturned.

Despite the challenges, like the three-hour time difference, GSI's team pulled together to meet deadlines. "Crislyn was sending emails that she's in California... she would send me emails at midnight, and I would get it in the morning," Ken recalls. Even with a little time zone adversity, the team's responsiveness was unwavering—keeping everything moving forward smoothly.

From Vision to Reality with GSI's Support

Although still in the early stages of adoption, the company is already seeing the powerful potential of a fully optimized ERP system. "We're only in month two of closing the books," Ken shares—but the progress they've made with GSI's support has already been transformative. "We envision real-time inventory, perpetual inventory numbers in the system, backdoor scanning of inventory items... and we'd be able to run P&Ls and balance sheets every month," Ken added. With GSI's expertise and unwavering dedication, these goals don't feel like distant dreams— they're becoming reality. The path ahead is clearer than ever, leading to a fully optimized system that will scale with Westborn Market's growth.

One of the most significant changes has been the shift to a new inventory methodology, which has required a shift in mindset for the management team. Ken describes the learning curve: "It's confusing to our senior management because we've changed from expensing everything upfront to recording the cost of goods sold as items are sold. We're working our way through the new methodology and reporting." Despite these hurdles, the team at Westborn Market remains optimistic, knowing the long-term benefits of the system will bring immense value to their operations.

NetSuite and GSI's Winning Formula

Ken emphasized the user-friendly nature of NetSuite and the significant benefits of partnering with GSI, a local ally. He shared, "I would recommend it. [NetSuite] is in the cloud, very user-friendly, and all our accounts payable folks love it without any major issues." Reflecting on their previous system, Ken noted, "It was harder to go from screen to screen in Great Plains... [NetSuite] is a very user-friendly system with multiple ways to get to whatever report you're trying to access." The simplicity and accessibility of NetSuite have already made a notable impact.

Ken also gave high praise to GSI's role in the implementation process, saying, "We worked with GSI to get everything done, even under tight deadlines. Crislyn and Ryan trained us on some tasks, which allowed us to replicate processes across departments and stores." With GSI's guidance, the team not only met deadlines but also built the foundation for a streamlined, efficient operation.

As Westborn Market continues to build on the foundation laid by GSI and NetSuite, the future looks bright. The path ahead is clear: a thriving, scalable business, powered by the tools and expertise that will keep them ahead of the curve, ready to meet every challenge and seize every opportunity.

For more information about how GSI can help optimize your organization's IT infrastructure, **contact us today**.

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