

WD-40 Case Study

“WD-40 Oils the Gears on its European Operations with the Help of Aspera Solutions and Epicor ERP”

At A Glance

Company Facts

- Location – Headquartered in San Diego, California with offices in Milton Keynes, UK
- Industry – Consumer Goods
- <https://www.wd40.co.uk/>

Challenge

- Rely on a system that was not fit-for-purpose, multilingual, or compliant across Europe.
- Grow the business without growing headcount
- Streamline processes into one system

Solution

Epicor® ERP

Partner

Aspera Solutions

Benefits

- Automated order processing, shipping and invoicing to free up employee time.
- Seamlessly integrated additional regional operations across Europe
- Doubled orders across Germany
- Improved multi-location communication

Customer Story

Headquartered in San Diego, with offices covering the Americas, Asia Pacific, and Europe, WD-40 is a globally renowned manufacturer of household products, namely its flagship lubricant, WD-40. Founded in 1953, the company encompasses a group of brands featuring a full range of high-performance products across maintenance, industrial cleaning, hobbyists, and home.

WD-40's signature lubricant is now sold in more than 176 countries and has become synonymous with rust prevention across the world. It was first founded when chemist Norm Larsen was looking for a water displacement solution for NASA to protect the Atlas Space Missile from rust and corrosion. It took 40 attempts to find a product that worked, hence the name WD-40.

The UK headquarters in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, covers Europe, Middle East, Africa, and India with a mixture of regionally based offices and distribution partners throughout the regions. Today in Europe, WD-40 is a £100 million plus business, working across eight markets, accounting for around 40 percent of the company's global business.

Challenge

After continuing to grow into new markets across Europe and wanting to open a new direct office in Portugal to support the existing Spanish office, WD-40 faced the complicated issue of migrating customer data in the system over to the new region. The same migration issues happened again more recently when a new office, which used to be part of the German office, was opened in the Netherlands. Considering that the company is primarily a sales and marketing business, WD-40 needed software that could incorporate all the sales and purchasing data from the existing German site so that it could be migrated to the new site in the Netherlands.

The European team realised that the software the business was relying on to track stock movement across regions was no longer agile enough to accommodate WD-40's growth. In fact, it didn't meet multicurrency or multilingual requirements, making it extremely hard for employees across Europe to use it effectively. The company had to ensure it was conducting business compliantly across regions and the system was not providing the flexibility to do so. The business required country-specific functionality, something that was noticeably absent from its current software solution.

Solution – Easing the Growing Pains with Automation

As the business continued to grow and the volume of orders continued to increase, the team was keen to incorporate electronic data interchange (EDI), allowing customers to send orders electronically so the team at WD-40 could see these orders in message format. Previously, the system was not geared towards processing this volume of orders electronically. This led the company to source a new system that would be able to not only accommodate the increasing volume of orders, but also be fit-for-purpose across its various European offices.

Facing these challenges, WD-40 researched available enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions and opted for Epicor ERP after close consultation with Epicor partner, Aspera Solutions. The team concluded that the functionality, flexibility, and cost of ownership of the platform was unparalleled and ultimately, most suited to the business' needs. During the design stage, Aspera Solutions was instrumental in implementing the core applications of Epicor ERP, including the multi-company and multiple-books functions. This meant that payments across regions could be centralised through one finance function in Milton Keynes and reports could be compiled in multiple currencies across multiple companies.

With the system's demand processing module, WD-40 has managed to automate much of its processing. Working with partners such as TIE Kinetix, WD-40 receives electronic orders that automatically go into the system and pass through various checks and controls before being automatically processed. The warehouse then ships the order, and the electronic invoice is immediately issued to the customer. This level of automation has enabled employees to move away from manual processing and reallocate their time to other useful tasks.

“Electronic order processing was an especially important feature of the software when the German business mode changed,” said Jonathan McCoy, general manager-IT at WD-40. “We had been selling to a third party who would then sell onto DIY customers, but this was changed so that we could work directly with customers. Because we had Epicor ERP, we could introduce electronic ordering for a large volume of customers quickly. It became a much smoother process across Europe.”

In fact, the team in Germany has at least doubled its order volume because it has been able to incorporate EDI. Shipping orders and compiling invoice forms across offices were previously laborious manual tasks, but the team has managed to streamline this process and work more

efficiently, saving a considerable amount of time and effort. This level of automation has proved pivotal in helping the business grow without increasing its headcount.

Integrating the finances

Similarly, the business has benefitted from improved financial capability. With a central finance function based in Milton Keynes, the team had difficulties managing product data across five to seven companies, often with time consuming duplication, causing significant issues for the finance team. With the Epicor ERP system in place, financial data is synchronised across all companies, allowing the finance function to work smarter, especially when dealing with various companies both inside and outside the UK.

The Next Steps

With 80 to 100 users already in Europe, the team at WD-40 continues to rely on Epicor ERP to streamline operations across Europe, automate processes and alleviate the busy sales teams from timely manual tasks. The flexibility of the system has illustrated its varied functionality to the team, and the company is continually looking to see how it can use the system more extensively to help the business work efficiently, whether through order automation or streamlining processes across its European network.

“Considering the many benefits we have seen from implementing Epicor ERP, we’re already looking to upgrade to the latest version of the software,” revealed McCoy. “We’re particularly keen to give our sales teams access to the system via mobile as part of or upgrade across Europe. It’s important that we’re all on the same page across all our EMEA operations. We’re excited for that the future holds when it comes to building on the efficiencies we’ve experienced with Epicor.”

With the continued support and guidance from Epicor partner Aspera Solutions, the WD-40 team can continue to build upon the system’s functionality as the business grows in the UK and across Europe.

“We’re excited to continue our ERP partnership with WD-40 and provide their team with the support needed to maximise the return on their ERP investment,” said Lonan Byrne, managing director, Aspera Solutions. “We’re looking forward to seeing how the ERP technology helps open up new opportunities for WD-40 and how it can be utilized to support WD-40’s continued growth.”



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