



Industrial Supplier Beats the Competition with Integrated CRM Solution

Deacon Industrial Supply turns to Microsoft Gold Partner Beringer Associates and Microsoft Dynamics CRM for improved efficiencies and better customer service.

Until recently, technology solutions for distributors focused primarily on back office operations. Now, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has emerged as the solution for customer facing and front office operations. Future focused distributors are now integrating both the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems for the back office with CRM for sales, inside sales, marketing and customer service.

CHALLENGE

Managing Data to Keep Competitive Edge

Deacon Industrial Supply is a family-owned distributor of pipe, valves, and fittings, primarily serving Industrial MRO and OEM as well as Commercial Construction in the Mid-Atlantic region since 1963. Driven by a commitment to providing the best customer service, Deacon has steadily grown into the region's leading industrial supplier, employing more than 100 employees across multiple locations, including a fleet of 18 trucks, and at least as many field reps.

Says Deacon CEO William Vail, "Because we stock the exact same products other distributors offer, what we are really selling is our distribution service and supply chain management." For that reason, says Vail, Deacon needed a customized program that tracked more than just sales. "Our reps are customer 'relationship' managers. Not all our client visits are for sales. We are calling on engineers, plant managers, project managers and others. We needed a way to better gauge how much time our reps were actually spending building relationships," he says.

Leveraging Data for Better Customer Service

He began with a thorough evaluation of all the company's existing data tracking and management systems. Says Deacon IT Manager Leo Foster, "For the sales team, we had built our own in-house time and expense program, but it was fairly simple. It tracked visits to customers and prospects as well as time spent and related expenses, but that was the extent of it." Deacon was also running Activant Prophet 21 as its ERP system, but according to Foster, lack of real time information was putting the credibility of Deacon's sales reps on the line. "The reps in the field could not access it so sometimes they walked into situations where they were not as informed as they needed to be."

When Vail says he and his team heard about Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM), "We were intrigued. We liked the flexibility it seemed to offer." Vail also says that Deacon placed its trust in Microsoft Gold Certified partners Beringer Associates because, "Beringer was very good at hearing us."

Beringer Associates, Inc. a Gold Certified Microsoft Partner and Expert in CRM Solutions for Distributors Brought It All Together

Foster says that Deacon reviewed various CRM systems, and met with several technology solutions providers, but determined that Microsoft and Beringer Associates together provided the most comprehensive solution to Deacon's challenge. "Of all the systems we looked at, Microsoft Dynamics CRM really was the best. It is the most flexible. It worked with the systems and the hardware we already had and we could customize it to do all the things we wanted it to do. But it was everything Beringer brought to the table that made all the difference." Vail agrees, "They had a thorough knowledge of how to gather all of our ERP data and bring it through the Microsoft system."



[Beringer Associates, Inc.](http://www.beringer.net)

1591 Hylton Road Pennsauken, NJ 08110 • Phone: 800.796.4854 or 856.910.7771 • Fax: 800.917.2056 or 856.910.7888

www.beringer.net • info@beringer.net

Along with being one of only a select number of technology solutions companies globally to be Microsoft Gold Certified, Beringer is also the leading expert in delivering fully integrated CRM solutions to the distribution industry. "That mattered a lot to us," says Foster. "We needed more than just someone to install the program. We needed a company we could trust for the long haul, one who has the resources and knowledge to respond quickly when an issue arises and is willing to take the time to work with us as our business needs change. We chose Beringer because of their expertise with Microsoft CRM and their desire to help us get the most out of our CRM solution. Unlike some partners I have dealt with I am confident Beringer will be there for us when we need them."

Technology to Support and Motivate Sales Team

In addition to providing real-time data to support field reps, Deacon sought to give both reps and management the ability to know immediately when a customer service issue, or any other issue, was imminent. According to Foster, "We wanted to prevent situations where a customer might call the company and speak with a customer service rep about delivery problems or other issues, but the sales rep actually in charge of the account had no idea what was going on. Maybe the first time they would hear of the issue would be the next time they met with the client. Now the rep knows before they walk in the door." Adds Vail, "The new system lets us track who was spoken to at any time, what was said, and what action was taken. Our customers are not used to this kind of immediate response. The value-add is enormous."

Now the Deacon Management Team can track all daily customer activity. In just about a half an hour a day, Vail says he can see in great detail what is happening with each customer, enhancing Deacon's ability to respond to small problems before they become big ones. "We are large enough to meet our customers' pricing, scale and efficiency needs. With the Microsoft CRM, now we can focus on excellent service," says Vail.

Increased Accountability

After implementation, says Vail, "There were many adjustments in the sales team's expectations of time management and productivity." Deacon field reps now have daily access to statistics on activities such as time spent with nondecision makers, and the quantity and make of competitive products used by clients. "Since implementing our Microsoft CRM with Beringer, we have seen actual face time with our clients at least double. This gives us enormous market opportunity, and allows our reps to be more enterprising, meaning they have the chance to make more money," says Vail.

About Beringer Associates

Beringer Associates has nearly fifteen years of experience providing technology solutions to the distribution industry and more than a decade of direct experience implementing CRM solutions for distributors. They work with a variety of distribution centric ERP applications providing seamless integration of these systems with Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

Additionally, Beringer offers Managed Network Services, Business Telephone Systems and Voice over IP solutions.

Beringer is a Gold Certified Microsoft Solutions Partner and a member of the elite Microsoft President's Club. President's Club represents a small group of top Microsoft Partners world-wide (top 5%) who reach key business milestones while maintaining extremely high levels of customer satisfaction.

"They have grown their business largely on the very high quality of customer and technical support provided to their clients. They have a full time Help Desk environment (running on a highly customized version of Microsoft CRM). This system assures they meet service levels for our customers. Customer Service and Technical Support is the top priority in their business - their philosophy is "good work leads to more work".

Paul Pusateri - Partner Account Manager - Microsoft

Beringer can be reached on the internet at www.beringer.net or by phone – **800.796.4854**.

