



CASE STUDY

Culliton Brothers Limited Opening the door to growth and expansion

Overview

Country: Canada
Industry: Mechanical and Electrical Contractor

Industry

Mechanical/Electrical Contractor located in Stratford, Ont.

Scenario

Home-grown software solution could no longer support growing organization

Company Profile

Family-owned, 77 year-old organization that serves clients in the commercial, industrial, institutional and residential markets.

Benefits

Allowed revenue to increase significantly from \$17 million in 2001 to \$30 million in 2008.

Software Used

- ◆ WennSoft Job Cost
- ◆ WennSoft Service Management Series
- ◆ WennSoft TimeTrack

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– Tim Culliton, General Manager for Culliton Brothers Limited

Situation

In 2001, Culliton Brothers Limited., a mechanical/electrical contractor located in Stratford, Ont., realized that the home-grown software it relied on to manage the business was no longer sufficient. The 77 year-old, family-owned company, which serves clients in the commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential markets, was growing, and a more robust, scalable solution was necessary for both its construction and service operations.

“We wanted to get out of the business of building our own software,” recalls Tim Culliton, the company’s President, who describes the process as far too time-consuming and costly.

Granted, the customized software was designed to meet many of the company’s needs. Unfortunately, it often came up short of expectations. “Customized software is never quite exactly what you want,” says Culliton. “We would spend a lot of time getting information. The documentation was very cumbersome.”

Meanwhile, customer requests for information were changing. “We were getting more detailed requests for equipment history,” he says. “We needed access to more specifics because the customer was becoming more demanding.”

Action

To remain competitive, Culliton Brothers needed to respond to those demands. The contractor required quick and easy access to project details and service histories as well as the ability to turn that information into meaningful reports. The firm responded by implementing the Service Management Series and Job Cost solutions developed by WennSoft, New Berlin, Wis.

One of the primary reasons Culliton Brothers chose WennSoft was its integration with the Microsoft Business Solutions accounting software package. Culliton Brothers firmly believes the integrated solution saves the firm time and increases efficiencies.

“We wanted a solution that was integrated. We didn’t want to run two databases of information,” Culliton says.

Yet integration is only one of the benefits Culliton Brothers realized as a result of the WennSoft implementation. Equally important is the ability to drill down to the level of project-detail customers require. “By identifying a piece of equipment, you can also identify parts requirements. WennSoft gives us the capability to build contracts for our customers,” remarks Culliton, who adds that the system also lets the company create templates for service inspections.

Culliton explains that the decision to implement WennSoft was an easy one. “We believed that WennSoft had a deeper customer base” than its competitors, he says. “Additionally, the Service Management and Job Cost solutions are extremely scalable and flexible, which are important factors for a growing company. For example, the WennSoft solution was customized to factor in Canadian tax rates.”

Results

Not surprisingly, Culliton Brothers is realizing many benefits from using WennSoft. “We’re saving a lot of management time because of the reports that we can build,” Culliton says. In fact, the ability to generate daily reports is vital because it gives the contractor an accurate picture of outstanding work orders as well as material and labor costs.

WennSoft has improved Culliton Brothers billing. It helps ensure their billing is accurate, which helps them capture additional revenue. It also gets invoices out quicker; on the service side of their business, they can get invoices out in approximately 15 days. Getting invoices out quicker reduces Culliton Brother’s cash cycle time – the time from the start of the order until a company receives payment from the customer.

“In this economic environment, reducing cycle time for cash management is essential,” said Don Evans, the Vice President of Finance and Administration for Culliton Brothers Limited.

Cash management is especially important for a company like Culliton Brothers Limited, which incurs a majority of its expenses up front. Materials, equipment and labor are all expenses that Culliton Brothers take on as soon as a job is started. If Culliton Brothers doesn’t get the money from their customers in a timely fashion, they may have to finance the expenditures. Since banks are charging a premium on loans, finance charges can dramatically reduce profitability on a job.

In addition to getting money in the door quicker, decreasing the time it takes to get invoices to customers has reduced the number of payment disputes they experience, particularly on the construction side of their business.

“The sooner the invoice is in the customer’s hand, the sooner you will get the money in the door. Because the customer doesn’t have to pay until they get the invoice,” said Evans.

Facilitating Growth

Since the implementation of WennSoft, Culliton Brothers’ revenue has increased significantly, jumping from \$17 million in 2001 to \$30 million in 2008. Yet no additional personnel were required to administer the expansion. “There’s no way we would have been able to manage the growth without the WennSoft software,” Culliton insists.

However, the 180-employee firm now has additional growth in mind in the form of acquisitions. “Acquisitions seem a lot more realistic now,” Culliton says.

Of course, the service side of the business has benefited as well, as information on service calls and technicians’ work-loads can be easily tracked. “It’s a much better environment for managing the technicians. Adding more technicians in a wider service area is a lot more possible as well,” says Culliton.

Culliton Brothers has also improved customer service as a result of the WennSoft implementation.

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About WennSoft

WennSoft, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, provides innovative business management solutions for public and private sector organizations focused on project management, field service and equipment/fleet management.

WennSoft services include assessment, training, implementation and go-live support. With more than a decade of experience in delivering superior applications in the field service and construction industries, WennSoft is the solution provider of choice.

A Good Value

Culliton Brothers Limited appreciates WennSoft because it provides a good value. They’ve looked at other competing systems, and find that WennSoft offers robust functionality for the cost of the system.

“As a mid-sized contractor, we need a system that provides great value for a price that we can afford, and WennSoft does that,” said Evans.

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