



Concordia Publishing House

Company Facts

- Location: St. Louis, Missouri
- Industry: Publishing
- Number of Employees: 230
- Web site: www.cph.org



“All of our people now have ready access to the data they need to help customers. They are able to answer most questions immediately, now that they have access to real-time data concerning stock availability and order status.”

Steve Harris, Executive Director, Innovation Technologies | Concordia Publishing House

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Outdated legacy system needed to be replaced with an integrated system that would provide access to information in real time, as well as have the flexibility to grow with the company as its needs changed

Solution

- Epicor Enterprise
- Epicor Precise POS

Benefits

- Positioning the company to greatly improve customer service
- Increasing order accuracy to 99.85%, while decreasing order fulfillment time
- Supporting real-time visibility of information

Concordia Publishing House (CPH) is the publishing arm of The Lutheran Church —Missouri Synod (LCMS), and was organized in 1869 to provide resources for Christian worship, education, and nurture. CPH is a Christian ministry, and a not-for-profit business, and currently manages 8,000 Christian products in a variety of formats and more than 50 languages.

CPH is organized to support its core competencies of Product Development, Customer Care, and Distribution. The company boasts benchmark levels of customer loyalty and workforce engagement. CPH sells its product through two channels: retail (or “direct” sales coming from direct marketing to churches, schools, professionals, and members of the LCMS), and trade (a national network of independent and chain bookstores, dealers, and distributors who buy at wholesale prices for resale). CPH operates under the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and is deeply oriented around its strategic objectives and continuous quality improvement processes.

The company has always been committed to using the very best present state technology to serve customers with benchmark levels of service and product. As part of the goal to remain at the forefront of technology, Concordia made the decision to implement Epicor Enterprise, including Epicor Precise POS.

Out with the old, in with the New

Concordia’s old system was outdated and no longer supported by the vendor. Forced to work with day old data because they were on a batch system solution—something had to change.

Concordia wanted one vendor, with a single point of contact and accountability. After evaluating several different solutions, they knew Epicor was the right choice. Concordia knew they wanted business intelligence, customer relationship management, warehouse management, financials and other offerings in a fully-integrated solution that could meet the needs of their growing company, while maintaining a low ongoing total cost of ownership.

Working with the New System

Concordia has 230 employees, all of whom touch the solution in some way. Whether it is to clock-in and out or to check if a specific item is in stock, the solution is truly utilized across the entire workforce. In the back office they have over 100 employees accessing the solution in the customer service, finance, marketing, production control and warehouse/distribution areas.

“All of our people now have ready access to the data they need to help customers,” said Steve Harris, executive director, information technologies for Concordia Publishing House. “They are able to answer most questions immediately, now that they have access to real-time data concerning stock availability and order status.

This has enabled us to work more efficiently, improved our relationship with our customers and made our employees more productive.”

With the end-to-end integration of the e-commerce storefront, warehousing, supply-chain and financials, Concordia has drastically reduced its order fulfillment cycle. With the previous system, order fulfillment routinely took three to five days.

Since implementing Epicor, Concordia now consistently fills over 98% of its orders by the next working day, many within the same day.

Concordia’s Bookstores

Concordia operates a bookstore at its headquarters location in St. Louis, along with bookstores at five other locations in the Midwest.

Before Concordia implemented the Epicor Precise POS solution the stores operated independently of the rest of the company and used solutions from several different vendors.

They had separate inventory as well as separate financial reporting mechanisms, and the integration of financial data into the overall operation of the company was difficult and time-consuming. The time had come to standardize this part of the operation.

Concordia wanted a solution that would fully integrate with their back office and would be easy to implement and use. They knew they would require a system that would handle all of their selling needs including returns, sales tax, special orders, reporting and more. The Epicor Precise POS solution fit the bill.

Shortly after they decided on Epicor Precise POS they began implementation. It was decided that the headquarters store would be implemented first, with Concordia taking over responsibility for implementing the other stores. The initial implementation was successfully completed in just three weeks.

Concordia has since completed implementations in four more stores, and also uses Epicor Precise POS extensively for retail selling at convention events, including one event with more than 25,000 attendees. “With each implementation the process becomes smoother - we are very pleased,” said Harris.

With the implementation of Epicor POS, the use of standardized business processes has greatly improved. Management is better able to see what is going on in the stores with real-time visibility. They are able to quickly analyze inventory and sales data to make informed decisions. Also, they are beginning to gain new efficiencies because they can deploy a consistent, standardized approach to store operation, including uniform pricing and inventory replenishment policies.

With this structure in place, they can look to a bright future in the religious publishing retail space.

“We have really enjoyed working with both Epicor and Precise,” said Marty Benner, Manager – Project Management Office for Concordia Publishing House.

“We knew what we wanted, and did our homework on the benefits of the solution, and they really did come up with the A+ grade.”

Best Practices with Epicor

Since the Epicor implementation, Concordia has reduced its IT staff from seven programmers down to three. Their inventory accuracy and order fulfillment accuracy have greatly increased. Because of the integration between the storefront and the back office, they have been able to successfully shift about 20% of their phone order volume to the Web, reducing order entry costs. And because they now have improved access to data, the length of their month-end closing cycle has been reduced by several days.

“With the implementation of Epicor we have really begun to see some additional best practices emerge,” said Benner.

“The IT burden has been reduced as each department manages the system to meet their requirements.”



Precise Business Solutions, Level 1, 116 Hobart Street, Mt. Hawthorn, Western Australia - 6016

+61 8 9242 5933 solutions@precisebusiness.com www.precisebusiness.com

Corporate Office

804 Las Cimas Parkway
Austin, TX 78746
USA
Toll Free: +1.888.448.2636
Direct: +1.512.328.2300
Fax: +1.512.278.5590

Latin America and Caribbean

Blvd. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882 Int. 104
Plaza Central, Col. Santa Maria
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, CP 64650
Mexico
Phone: +52.81.1551.7100
Fax: +52.81.1551.7117

Europe, Middle East and Africa

Precise EMEA
6-8 Market Place
Reading RG1 2EG
Berkshire
United Kingdom
Phone: +44.1189.254.964

Asia

238A Thomson Road #23-06
Novena Square Tower A
Singapore 307684
Singapore
Phone: +65.6333.8121
Fax: +65.6333.8131

Australia

Precise Business Solutions
Level 1, 116 Hobart St.
Mt. Hawthorn, WA 6016
Australia
Phone: +61.8.9242.5933
Fax: +61.8.9242.5934