

No Hidden Problems SAP and Blue Ocean Systems keep operations growing for 90 year old manufacturer!



FROM its simple beginnings as a small sail manufacturer in a loft in New York City, CR Daniels has grown over its 90 year lifetime into a diversified manufacturer of everything from simple tote bags to energy absorption seats for the Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopter.

Now headquartered in Ellicott City, Maryland, the company has grown from its humble New York loft into 180,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing and distribution facilities in Maryland, an additional 130,000 sq. ft. in Rutledge, Tennessee, and sales offices throughout the country.

And although CR Daniels can make a myriad of products, the company runs its diverse manufacturing, inventory, sales and distribution operations through the use of a seemingly simple business software application.

"CR Daniels is an extremely diversified company, President and CEO Gary Abel said. "We started out as a canvas manufacturer in New York City in 1918 and now have expertise in fabric, plastic and metal products. Our Dandux brand of material handling products serve many industries, including manufacturing, distribution, hospital-ity and health care, yet we still manufacture one of our original products... the 'Coal Bag.' Now sold under its Wild Duck trademark, the bag originally used to carry coal to house furnaces now functions as one of the strongest and best all-around tote bags money can buy."

In 2002, CR Daniels further diversified its product offering when it expanded into the distribution of outdoor hunting and apparel accessories by adding Drake Waterfowl Systems, McAlister Clothing, Ol' Tom Technical Turkey, and RutWear Big Game Technologies to its line of products. "With this addition of product lines, we needed

a new integrated business software package to handle the day to day demands of the fast moving distribution operation," Abel said, noting that the sales office was in Olive Branch, Mississippi, the distribution facility in Rutledge, Tennessee, and the main office in Ellicott City, Maryland.

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**Gary Abel, President and CEO
CR Daniels**

"Although separated by hundreds of miles, the operation needed to function as if they all were located in the next room," he said. "That's when we turned to SAP."

"As far as corporate operations were concerned, we were using a number of different software products and applications," Abel observed, "but decided to import all operations into one system." "We were a growing company, and we needed to ensure an integrated and complete product manufacturing, distribution and sales operation," he said. Abel said the company was using application packages for its manufacturing and distribution software from JD Edwards.

"We wanted, however, software better positioned for future growth, and geared to the distributive processing," he noted. "And SAP was the product of choice," he declared.

"We now have a number of transactions moving on SAP," Abel said, noting that SAP "lets us use an integrated process, and allows our facilities, departments and personnel in Maryland, Tennessee and Mis-

A Blue Ocean Systems Success Story...CR Daniels

Mississippi to work as if they all were just across the hall from each other."

Abel added that as CR Daniels started growing with SAP, "we went through the past four years, or half of our SAP life, with Blue Ocean Systems."

"When we first started working with SAP, we initially went through a number of SAP providers, since SAP was still

a relatively new product in the United States in the 2002-2003 time frames," he said.

Abel noted, though, that "as we went through a number of partners, we found out that Blue Ocean Systems really wanted to understand our business."

"Blue Ocean Systems showed a level of professionalism, not only of the SAP product line, but also of wanting to learn how our own business operates," Abel said.

"Blue Ocean works with us as if we were their only client," Abel noted. "Our relationship works really well."

"We didn't want to get stuck with a business software package that would mandate we have to keep an IT staff in-house," Abel said. "In fact, with SAP, we only have and need one person who works full time at CR Daniels on an IT basis," he said. "And since SAP Business One doesn't require us to have a fully dedicated IT staff, Blue Ocean Systems is effectively our in-house IT staff."

To assist its diverse client base, **Blue Ocean Systems organizes annual group meetings** with its clients where SAP Business One users, especially the smaller sized companies, can network together to learn how they all use Business One and share ideas and experiences with Business One.

These meetings help Blue Ocean Systems' clients learn what and how each company is using SAP Business One, by comparing notes and experiences and sharing situations, challenges and opportunities where they can utilize SAP Business One which they possibly never would have

thought of individually. And CR Daniels, one of the founding members of the group meetings run by Blue Ocean Systems, is sold on the idea.

"Expansion for us is a constant, and we are trying to expand usage constantly," he said.

"And this is where working with Blue Ocean is more than just a business relationship," he added. "It's a partnership."

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Abel observed that the SAP Business One open dedicated system "allows us to be very versatile in how we can expand our operations."

"SAP gave us the ability to find new uses for it," he explained. "Facilities in different locations were tied in quickly and efficiently, and now we are in the process of trying it in other areas, such as giving field personnel online access to live data."

"Working with Blue Ocean Systems is definitely a two-way street," Abel concluded. "They have to rely on us to say what is important from our needs and perspective, and we have to rely on them to implement exactly what we need."

"There are a number of factors to make a system work," he added, "including reliability, function, ease of usage and service, and, of course, cost effectiveness. **And in working with Blue Ocean, everything falls right into place.**" •

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