

DAKOTA GYPSUM & INSULATION SUPPLY CO.



In business since 1985, Dakota Gypsum & Insulation Supply Company has cornered the drywall distribution market in the Dakota's and western Minnesota. With discussion of possible expansion, Dakota Gypsum trusts DMSi's Agility software to provide drywall functionality needed to grow their customer base. According to Phil Birnbaum, Dakota Gypsum system manager, "Things that would've taken two days to find sifting through paperwork, now take five minutes in Agility."

The Challenge

For 13 years, Dakota Gypsum used generic software which limited access to two users at the same time and lacked industry specific functionality. The system was complicated, with individual item codes assigned for every size of product. Items were priced by the piece and did not use standard drywall dimensions. Sales orders were handwritten and inventory consisted of walking into the warehouse to physically check the availability of items. "By the time we printed a list of our inventory, it was already outdated," explains Birnbaum. "The sales staff would sell an item and then go out to the yard to see that it had already been sold." Additionally, Dakota Gypsum was challenged with aging software, a lack of technical support, and frequent hardware maintenance. "We were replacing our hardware every three to five years," says Birnbaum. "With no full-time IT person on staff, maintaining the server became a hassle."

The Solution

The need for drywall specific functionality, inventory control, and reliable hardware led Dakota Gypsum to select DMSi's Agility software. Agility provides Dakota Gypsum with timely information that is accurate and easy to retrieve. From drywall specific functionality to e-commerce to worry-free hardware, Agility provides Dakota Gypsum with tools to effectively run their business. "The ease of Agility lets us process orders and view inventory in real time," explains Birnbaum. "And, I really don't know how we lived without sheet good functionality before Agility."

Dakota Gypsum assigns one item code for multiple lengths in Agility, resulting in simpler order entry. Agility's sheet good item type functionality increases efficiency for drywall distributors with powerful inventory control, accurate data, and quick order entry. Assigning simple and logical item codes allows Dakota Gypsum to easily find items without typing in every length. The result is a system that pulls items as you type, greatly reducing the number of keystrokes used. "We reduced our number of item codes from 3,000 to 1,500," says Birnbaum. "And, when determining item codes, the simpler the better." Also, as a Drake preferred member, they hook up to Drake's hub to utilize e-commerce functions such as Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). EDI enables Dakota Gypsum to easily exchange electronic documents from their server to their vendors' systems. Documents such as invoices and purchase orders are transmitted from one server to another in a standard electronic format; saving time and money with each document exchange.

By running on Agility's Software as a Service (SaaS) model, Dakota Gypsum cut costs by outsourcing the complexity of managing server and communication hardware, software, updates, and backups. Transferring IT infrastructure to a SaaS facility literally removes hardware and software from their business. The flexibility of SaaS allows Dakota Gypsum to run Agility with a PC and reliable Internet connection from anywhere in the world. "After researching the cost of employing an IT person to maintain the hardware, we found that Agility SaaS was a more cost effective option," says Birnbaum. Since they share the infrastructure with hundreds of companies, a SaaS environment can provide better technologies with lower cost, higher security, and unlimited growth.

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