

KOHL BUILDING PRODUCTS



Kohl Building Products was founded in 1946 on Reading's rolling hillside, a town known for its railroad. It remains family-owned today, distributing windows, vinyl siding, roofing, shutters and doors to professional builders and remodelers throughout branches in seven communities. To help manage it all, Kohl uses DMSi's sophisticated accounting and business management software to convert roofing and siding calculations into digestible facts and eliminate time consuming data entry.

The Challenge

According to Kohl Finance Director John Noecker, one of the worst things that can happen to a building products distributor is to look up inventory data for a customer and then get stung by inaccuracy or inability to deliver as promised. For years, Kohl made due with a generic accounting system designed more for electrical parts suppliers - on-going enhancements weren't much help for handling squares, pallets, bundles and other units of measure. Before partnering with DMSi, duplicate tasks and re-keying information at the sales counter robbed Kohl of more sales and faster turn-around time than Noecker first believed. Yet, the staff was constantly logging time to re-enter orders and fix errors. "Inventory was really becoming a challenge," stated Noecker. "What sold us on the new system was DMSi's complete understanding of our business, the types of people we deal with, the square measurements, and the products we sell. We were convinced of the potential for efficiency and profitability almost as soon as we saw how well vertical software can keep track of our products."

The Solution

In 1995, the Associated Building Material Distributors of America (ABM) member converted its entire operation to DMSi back- and front-office software. Since then, internal business efficiency and sales have increased steadily. When researching inventory and business management tools, Noecker encourages building product distributors to look for a technology partner whose development includes direct input from others in the industry and ensure the technology partner has support personnel in place who understand your unique circumstances. Noecker stated, "I believe the key is to look for a partner that's already invented the wheel and one that is truly focused on your business."

DMSi software has helped Kohl grow fast with few people and more control. Making the switch to DMSi software with its special industry interfaces - EPOPS and Anderson IQ - helped Kohl bank at least eight hours a week for each salesperson. Kohl is now saving thousands of hours annually, once spent re-entering orders, freeing employees to go after additional sales.

"With the EPOPS interface, we've eliminated the process of re-entering orders, which cut down our time and decreases the chance of error. I've done my share of programming in the past, so I appreciate how well EPOPS integrates into our core DMSi software system," Noecker added. "With useful features specific to building products, we're able to automate more processes, which save us time and eventually money."

Kohl is now finding more profitability within their company, using automated processes in vertical technology to make a distinguishable separation from their competitors. "DMSi industry specific software offers features and advantages I didn't know we needed at first, but rely on now. AP reconciliation for our roofing and siding operation is a simple concept I would have never thought of, but by providing the exact value of our inventory at the end of every day we have more peace of mind," concluded Noecker.

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