



### At a Glance

Ace Clearwater Enterprises

### Industry

Sheet Metal Fabricating

### Headquarters

Torrance, CA

### Employees

180 Employees

### Solution

Epicor Vantage

### Business Challenge

Antiquated ERP system could not provide timely information access to keep up with accelerated pace of manufacturing business

### Solution

Flexible, all-in-one solution that gathers data and distributes it throughout the company in real-time

### Business Benefits

- Better, faster decision-making through improved visibility
- User-friendly installation, upgrades and maintenance
- Improved supply chain management
- Reduced dependence on paperwork

ACE Clearwater Enterprises (ACE) is a family-owned manufacturer of sheet metal products, specializing in complex formed and welded assemblies for the aerospace, automotive, and power-generation industries. Notable customers include Honeywell, Lockheed Martin, GE, Bell Helicopter, Boeing, and several foreign aerospace companies.

Prior to Vantage, ACE used a legacy UNIX-based ERP system with other databases running in the background. Lum says this often caused user problems and wasted time transferring data between applications. And because it was a “store and forward” system, the data was not real-time.

Lum is in his eleventh year at ACE and says customers are expecting faster turnaround times every year. Through vertical integration, ACE streamlined its production cycle by bringing new equipment and processes in-house. But that was just the beginning.

ACE quickly realized they needed a flexible, integrated system that could aggregate and distribute real-time data to users across the entire company for analysis and decision-making. It also had to fit ACE’s business environment and offer user-friendly installation, upgrades and maintenance, and a lower total cost of ownership and simpler overall system administration.

Lum said Epicor’s excellent reputation was also important. “We knew Epicor would stand behind its product and continue to implement new features and innovations. “Epicor Vantage 8.0, the industry’s first manufacturing software solution based on a 100-percent service-oriented architecture (SOA), best satisfied ACE’s criteria.

### Smooth Implementation

To plan the implementation, eight three person process teams were formed, including operations, purchasing, contracts and accounting. Training was conducted at all three facilities on a team-by-team basis.

Converting the databases was the most time-consuming step. ACE’s programmer coordinated the data transfer with team leads and worked with an Epicor consultant to fine-tune configurations within Vantage. In the week before

conversion, the teams inventoried and collected open orders from the shop floors. System data was downloaded on Wednesday, verified on Thursday, and uploaded into the new Vantage system on the Friday before the Memorial Day weekend.

Teams worked on Saturday and Sunday to recreate all open orders, completing the conversion process by Sunday afternoon and leaving Memorial Day free for parades and barbecues. On Tuesday morning, ACE was off and running on Vantage 8.

## User-Friendly and Responsive

"We've found Vantage 8 to be easy to learn and very user-friendly," notes Lum, adding that the applications and clients are easy to install, upgrade and maintain. Using ACE's existing Windows platform and TCP/IP infrastructure eliminates the need for propriety hardware and infrastructure.

"Vantage 8.0 is a solid product, built on the Microsoft .NET platform from the ground up — it's very responsive," says Lum.

"Very responsive" is also how Lum describes Epicor's tech support. "They are the best I've experienced in the industry. " ACE uses Vantage throughout the entire company, with 50 users and 20 bar code sessions.

Because Vantage is based on the .NET platform, ACE users now share information across applications with analytical tools, which Lum calls "a tremendous time-saving benefit." Reports can be easily modified and special business activity queries (BAQ) written to deliver real-time data to ACE users. For ACE's purchasing staff, Lum says Vantage reports and BAQs give them critical information and optimal visibility in managing the company's supply chain.

## Less Paper-Pushing, More Visibility

The integrated Vantage solution means less paper-pushing, a goal ACE first established five years ago. For example, Vantage gives ACE online, real-time visibility of contract review requirements for ISO quality certification. Previously, paper was shuffled between separate tracking systems and databases. Furthermore, quality documentation is now incorporated directly into Vantage, rather than ACE personnel recording bad parts on separate paper forms.

Lum says part traceability is very important to ACE customers, particularly in the aerospace industry. "The lot-tracing capabilities within Vantage help accelerate that process.

"Customers today also want immediate visibility on the status of their orders — they don't want to wait," Lum says. ACE plans to offer its customers Web-interface capabilities in the near future, through the Vantage's Web service capabilities. States Lum, "This will be another competitive advantage."

**"Since we started running Vantage 8, the biggest benefit we have experienced is the ability to gather real-time data and rapidly transfer it to our users for analysis and decision-making."**

King Lum, Director of progress with  
ACE Clearwater Enterprises

## About Epicor

Epicor is a leading provider of enterprise business software solutions to the midmarket and divisions of Global 1000 companies. Founded in 1984, Epicor serves over 20,000 customers in more than 140 countries, providing solutions in over 30 languages.



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