

Pellerin Milnor Corporation

The Goal

Affordably automate sales lead generation compatibly with the existing ERP system.

The Challenge

Traditional pricing models for business software are far too expensive for a midrange company.

The Solution

CinAPPS™ (ASP) with Cincom Inquiry to Order Solution – Sales Configuration, linking Pellerin Milnor's sales-lead tracking and product configuration with its dealers worldwide via the web.

Key Results

- With CinAPPS (ASP) and Cincom Inquiry to Order Solution, Pellerin Milnor focuses on manufacturing laundry equipment, confident that sales leads are properly and promptly distributed to its dealer network.
- With CinAPPS, the marketing department is not concerned with the technology, not even to learn the technical terms.
- Lead distribution is cut from weeks to days or even hours.
- Some expenses are eliminated entirely.
- All database administration and web-site management are handled by CinAPPS personnel without diminishing the productivity of the Pellerin Milnor staff.



Nothing drags on revenues like slow lead generation and processing. Hot prospects eagerly send their postcards or e-mails – and wait. Wait for a call. Wait for a mailing.

Wait to be acknowledged. Wait until they turn to stone – as in stone-cold calls.

One midrange manufacturer was determined not to let it happen, but the company also needed a pricing model compatible with its size, its market, and its new ERP system.

Enter CinAPPS and Cincom's sales configuration and lead processing components of Cincom Inquiry to Order. Exit problem.

What started as Pellerin Milnor Corporation's plan to upgrade its ERP system has led to a new and more sustainable model for buying the software power it needs.

Like many midrange manufacturers in the late '90s, Pellerin Milnor confronted the Y2K compatibility issue with a sweeping review of its ERP requirements. During that assessment, it determined that automating sales configuration of its commercial laundry-equipment products was essential both to sales and to cost control.

At half a million U.S. dollars for implementation, however, vendors' proposals were too high for the Louisiana-based company, according to Marketing Manager Rick Kelly.

Doing nothing was emphatically not an option. Sales leads for its dealer network went through a largely manual process that often took three weeks to deliver, said Stephanie Holling, the company's marketing coordinator. Pellerin Milnor's IT staff was already too busy with the new ERP system to help.

Leveraging the Software Solution

Kelly said that among vendors, Cincom Systems offered the best support with Cincom Inquiry to Order Solution, a system that performed both sales lead tracking and product configuration. Moreover, it could be purchased on an outsource basis from Cincom's CinAPPS subsidiary, an application service provider (ASP).

The ASP model allowed Pellerin Milnor to leverage suitable software for the 800-employee firm at a price it could afford. From the beginning, Cincom's Sales Configuration configured about three-quarters of its best-selling products, Kelly said. Also, Cincom cut the number of configuration errors dramatically. "They all but disappeared," he said.

The next step was to help its field staff and dealers track leads more effectively. The old lead system, which Holling referred to as "a joke," yielded in January 2000 to the CinAPPS model of Cincom's Sales Configuration. All leads were routed to the manufacturer's ad department, where personnel keyed data onto a form at CinAPPS' web site, recording it to a remote database and automatically e-mailing the dealer with the lead. Prospective customers can now respond to ads by e-mail.

The dealer can also log on to the password-protected site to view leads assigned to them, even entering new information about follow-up contacts. Depending on the password, the tracking system will display only those leads assigned to that person. Because Holling issues the passwords, she controls system access.

At Pellerin Milnor's 42,270-square-meter factory near New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, the company produces washer extractors, automated tunnel-washing systems, denim-processing machinery, dryers, material-handling systems, and laundry computer networks.



Plowing Productivity Back Into the Business

According to Holling, automating the lead tracking in this way benefits her company in three ways. First, it saves time in contacting prospects while their interest is still high, which turns sales more quickly. Second, it saves money in eliminating postage costs. Third, the CinAPPS model makes Holling more productive because she enjoys instant technical support – something she could not expect from her company's IT staff. With no technical impediments, her extra productivity gets plowed back into her real job, marketing.

Cincom's Solution cut the number of configuration errors dramatically at Pellerin Milnor. According to Marketing Manager, Rick Kelly, "They all but disappeared."

Pellerin Milnor's new lead-tracking system allows sales managers and dealers to produce accurate sales pipeline reports and analyze the effectiveness of trade shows, direct mail, and magazine advertising. "We'll find out the response to different advertisements in different publications," Holling said, "and focus in on those to try to get the best response."

"The longer-term goal," Kelly said, "is to implement the [Cincom] configurator on the web." He said that this will allow the company's 100 dealers in North America, Europe, and Asia "to configure and enter their own machinery [orders] into our production system ... without sending in a purchase order through fax or e-mail."

Holling said her company would have CinAPPS post and maintain on the web an electronic catalog of Pellerin Milnor products that its dealers can access.

The Value of Outsourcing for Midrange Companies

Midrange companies in particular benefit from the lower pricing available from companies like CinAPPS, says one internet publisher that tracks the application service provider (ASP) industry. These companies make constant changes to both their business models and technology in order to compete.

The ASP model gives them access to sophisticated technology that previously only the largest companies could afford, according to Outsourcing Center. "Mid-sized companies and those enjoying rapid growth ... are turning to [ASPs] to supply a cost-effective solution that can grow with their changing needs. The buyers are leaving the training, installing, and upgrading of this software to them. The result: Buyers can re-engineer their business practices at a price they can afford."

CinAPPS General Manager, Pat Dowling, said his company offers access to all of the applications within Cincom Systems' product suite, which also includes ERP components, document management, call center and customer relationship management, and e-commerce initiatives.

In its marketing, CinAPPS targets medium-sized companies because they are most challenged to "manage all of their software applications and still do the strategic planning that is required of all businesses today," Dowling said.



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
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