



infor™

CASE STUDY

Babbitt Chainwheels streamlines operations and improves customer service with Infor CloudSuite Distribution

Babbitt Chainwheels is a leading manufacturer and distributor of manually operated overhead valve actuators (chainwheels) headquartered in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Operating a valve accessories manufacturing division and a fastener import and distribution division, its two business units are under one roof so many employees work for both.

Due to the product availability, price, and shipping time it offers, Babbitt Chainwheels is optimally positioned to stand out from competitors. It focuses within the niche chainwheel market and has been a leader in that space since 1915.

Babbitt
CHAINWHEELS

Headquarters
New Bedford, MA

Industry
Manufacturing and distribution

Infor product
Infor® CloudSuite Distribution

Website
babbitt.com

“ We have seen substantial improvements across ordering, purchasing, warehousing, and customer service since going live on Infor CloudSuite Distribution.”

IKE BABBITT
Vice President of Operations, Babbitt Chainwheels

Driving forces for modernization

For decades, Babbitt Chainwheels relied on an on-premises enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to run its business. As the organization grew and customer expectations evolved, its legacy system could not keep up. The user interface was not user-friendly, did not offer the robust reporting or transparency it needed to make decisions, and posed long-term security concerns. Because of the time it took to manually enter complex orders, Babbitt Chainwheels struggled with a large backlog. Plus, its legacy system did not have the flexibility to engage with customers and create a true omni-channel shopping experience. Combining these challenges with retiring IT staff made the need for modernization greater than ever.

A new digital platform

Babbitt Chainwheels knew it had a unique opportunity to digitally transform its business. Looking at what the market had to offer, the company's leadership determined that Infor CloudSuite™ Distribution was the best fit for their needs because of its user-friendly interface, lower total cost of ownership, ease of maintenance, robust reporting capabilities, and much more.

As an SMB company, Babbitt Chainwheels wanted a strong partner to support its data security. Because the Infor cloud is built on Amazon Web Services® (AWS®), the market leader for cloud-based infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and platform as a service (PaaS), the manufacturer knew it had a reliable collaborator in Infor. "The fact that our data can be managed and protected by an industry leader like AWS gives us confidence in our data security and is much safer than us managing it onsite with uncertainty that our firewall is protecting our on-premise[s] server," said Ike Babbitt, Vice President of Operations.

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Business challenges

- Clunky on-premises software was not user-friendly
- Lack of data visibility, accurate reporting, and transparency
- Managing and protecting data on-premises was time-consuming and posed security concerns
- Retiring IT staff meant Babbitt Chainwheels was losing tribal knowledge

Babbitt Chainwheels leadership had strategic goals in mind for their new digital platform, but they would soon realize that the benefits of modernization were greater than they imagined.

Streamlined operations

Soon after implementing CloudSuite Distribution, Babbitt Chainwheels saw substantial improvements across ordering, purchasing, and warehousing. Dealing with millions of pounds of fasteners every day makes the company's orders extremely long and complex. A 250-line item order that used to take them half a day to enter now only takes three minutes because it can be uploaded electronically. This reduction in order entry time created a ripple of positive results across the business. The backlog of orders was quickly cleared and new orders were entered and fulfilled with no mistakes, ultimately improving customer satisfaction. "Our open order count went down 75% and now we're getting substantially fewer calls from customers asking questions after orders," Babbitt says.

Now using cycle counts to help with inventory accuracy, Babbitt Chainwheels can trust the system to provide accurate data so it can avoid over ordering and limit the amount of inventory on hand—both of which improves purchasing. Having accurate inventory has increased the number of orders they pick per day and has significantly increased customer satisfaction. "We've substantially decreased the amount of time it takes from when we get a purchase order to when the product is in our customers' hands," Babbitt says. "Our order to delivery times have shrunk because of the efficiencies and streamlined workflows."

Empowered decisions

Babbitt Chainwheels' legacy system did not provide clear metrics, which created silos across its business. Employees in all business units did not have the data visibility and transparency they needed to make confident business decisions.

The robust dashboards on CloudSuite Distribution put information at Babbitt Chainwheels' fingertips. Management is now able to customize the information that is delivered daily and can manipulate it as needed. "I look at three different areas of our business every single day—sales, warehousing, and purchasing. The data is available wherever and whenever I need it, and I feel empowered because I'm making data-driven business decisions," Babbitt said.

Seamless customer experience

One of the primary reasons Babbitt Chainwheels moved to the cloud was a legacy system that lacked the infrastructure to create a seamless omni-channel shopping experience. CloudSuite Distribution has enabled Babbitt Chainwheels customers to buy the way they want, whether through ecommerce, EDI, API, email, phone call, or any other form. Improving and expanding channel offerings has provided its customers with the flexibility and self-service capabilities they demand.

About Aktion

Aktion Associates is a national ERP software reseller and IT infrastructure provider focused on the Construction, Distribution and Manufacturing industries. Since 1979, more than 4,500 customers have chosen Aktion as their technology advisor. With a workforce of 200 professionals in application consulting, network and software engineering, these teams utilize proprietary lean implementation processes to help customers realize the value of their IT investment.

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Business results

- Reduced order entry time from half a day to three minutes, nearly a 100% decrease
- Streamlined workflows decreased order-to-delivery times
- Decreased open order count by 75%
- Cycle counts significantly improved inventory accuracy

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Infor builds business software for specific industries in the cloud. With 17,000 employees and over 68,000 customers in more than 170 countries, Infor software is designed for progress. To learn more, please visit www.infor.com.

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