ACT!
by Sage

H. J. Oldenkamp builds relationships with ACT! by Sage Premium

For more than 60 years, H. J. Oldenkamp Co. has specialized in the sales and marketing of nationally branded interior building products, such as DuPont surfaces and Merillat cabinetry. In its role as a wholesale distributor, H. J. Oldenkamp regularly communicates with manufacturers, fabricators, retailers, builders, and consumers. To ensure its corporate communications with this diverse audience remain professional, consistent, relevant, and accurate, H. J. Oldenkamp relies on ACT! by Sage Premium.

"We use ACT! Premium throughout the organization," says Mark Renn, marketing manager at H. J. Oldenkamp. "Our sales managers, team leaders, marketing staff, support personnel, and outside sales reps all use it to communicate with our customers and suppliers."

Contacts Unaccounted For

Until five years ago, H. J. Oldenkamp had no contact management software, relying on customer records in its accounting database to store basic details about its relationships. This situation left a large number of contacts unrecorded as Renn explains, "We do a lot of what I call down-stream selling: working with specialty shops and retailers to promote the use of the products we carry and working with the builders who buy from those specialty shops. If we haven't yet sold them anything, our accounting software won't hold a record of them." Each salesperson kept their own list of prospects and contacts, which meant management had no visibility into the overall sales cycle.

Renn and his team looked at Goldmine and Siebel before deciding on ACT! Premium. "ACT! Premium won us over with its flexibility, affordability, and the availability of a well-qualified local consultant," recalls Renn. "Having the local support from our ACT! Certified Consultant is very important to us."

Build a Communication Solution

H. J. Oldenkamp's ACT! Certified Consultant (CC) worked closely with Renn and his team to customize ACT! Premium to meet the company's specific requirements. The company segments its operations into three divisions: retail sales, commercial sales, and new home construction. New data tabs and fields were added to allow H. J. Oldenkamp to track the unique details of these different relationships. "We now have a complete record of not only the relationships we have with our own prospects and customers, but also the relationships we have with our customers' prospects and customers," explains Renn.

Customer:

H. J. Oldenkamp Co.

Industry:

Wholesale Building Products

Location:

Warren, Michigan

Number of Locations: 1

Number of Employees: 45

Number of ACT! Users: 30

Solution:

ACT! by Sage Premium

CHALLENGE

The company's accounting software held customer information, but had no provision for tracking prospects or business partners. Without a central database for contact information, each representative kept their own lists. Management lacked visibility into the sales cycle.

SOLUTION

With ACT! by Sage Premium, the company has a single, centralized database readily accessible both to traveling and in-house staff.

RESULTS

Identifying market trends helps H. J. Oldenkamp tailor its marketing and sales activities appropriately. The company can track the relationships it has with customers, prospects, and business partners using a single, centralized database.

Field level security allows H. J. Oldenkamp to designate some fields as view only, and hide others fields entirely. "We've got 30 people using ACT! Premium," says Renn, "in all different capacities, so the ability to tailor it to each user is very important."

The CC also developed an import utility that brings purchase history data from H. J. Oldenkamp's accounting software into ACT! Premium. "Having sales history in ACT! Premium really ties things together for us," says Renn. "It means our remote sales representatives, who don't have access to the accounting software, have the details of those past sales as they're working on new sales."

Profile Contacts And Uncover Trends

Management uses ACT! Premium to profile the company's best customers and identify the key individuals within those companies. "We sell to retail giants like Lowe's and The Home Depot, and ACT! Premium allows us to associate all the individuals we deal with in the various departments with the larger company," explains Renn.

ACT! Premium allows the company to identify and report on trends in its marketplace—information it uses to make strategic business decisions. For example, H. J. Oldenkamp has seen its market change recently, with a trend favoring large home centers over smaller specialty retailers "We need to know who our customers are—where our business is coming from," says Renn. "ACT! Premium helps us tailor our marketing to our audience and better anticipate upcoming changes."

Pursue Opportunities

Staff relies on the calendar function within ACT! Premium to schedule sales calls, follow-up tasks, and meetings. "I think ACT! Premium has made us better communicators," says Renn. "By eliminating all of those lists and putting all our data in one place we're naturally more efficient, with less wasted time and effort."

H. J. Oldenkamp imports leads received from various manufacturers into ACT! Premium. The leads are then assigned to retailers for follow up. "We're able to store the date the lead was received, who we sent it to, and the results of any contact," says Renn.

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The Opportunities feature within ACT! Premium allows staff to track upcoming projects. "We create an opportunity when we're aware of a large commercial development project that's in the planning stages," explains Renn. "It might still be years away, but by keeping a record of it, we can include it in our forecasts and follow up with our contacts to be sure we're there when they're making decisions."

Photographs of retail product displays are attached to contact records within ACT! Premium to make it easier for staff to update and restock displays. The Mail Merge feature speeds the creation of customer mailings and e-mail marketing messages.

To review and update information about their contacts from the field, H. J. Oldenkamp's traveling sales staff access ACT! Premium remotely on their laptop computers. The laptop databases are synchronized with the main database as the sales staff connect over the Internet.

With the centralized database and powerful communication tools that the ACT! Premium solution provides, H. J. Oldenkamp can reach a diverse audience, pursue new opportunities, and manage the details of its relationships.

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Sage Software supports the needs, challenges, and dreams of more than 2.7 million small and midsized business customers in North America through easy-to-use, scalable, and customizable software and services. Our products help manage a complete range of business functions including: accounting, operations, customer relationship management, human resources, time tracking, merchant services and the specialized needs of the construction, distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofit, and real estate industries.

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