

Johnstone Supply Fresno Uses MITS To Better Manage Their Store Group



COMPANY BACKGROUND

Starting with a single store in 1953, Johnstone Supply has grown over the years to become one of the largest HVACR wholesale distributors in the US, boasting over 350 independently-owned stores that generate over a billion dollars in annual sales. They also produce the famous 'Johnstone Catalog', a listing of over 50,000 parts and supplies for the HVACR market.

One Johnstone group in particular, Johnstone Supply - Fresno, is comprised of 35 employees in 5 locations spread across Central California. The ownership of these stores is very much a family affair, with the second generation stepping into the roles of senior management following the retirement of the original owners. Johnstone-Fresno's Controller, Bill Kidd, manages the financials for these 5 locations, which can include capital purchase planning, payroll, A/R, etc. In addition to these duties, Bill also manages his own tax business, practices in front of the IRS and teaches business classes at a local community college.

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SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION

Bill, it turns out, had been looking for a BI & Reporting tool for his store group for quite a while. Prior to MITS, Johnstone-Fresno was simply downloading ERP data into an Excel spreadsheet and spending upwards of 2-3 hours manipulating the data. This was less than ideal, not only from a time and effort standpoint, but also because the finished product didn't have a lot of detail to it. This method, he felt, was both inefficient and lacking in quality of analysis.

Armed with the knowledge of current company practices, Bill began an internet search looking for a BI tool that would meet his group's needs. One of the companies that met his criteria was MITS. They had the high level Dashboard views that senior management required, along with the ability to dive deeper into the data at a moment's notice. Another factor in MITS' favor was that a large and successful Johnstone Supply store in Las Vegas was currently using MITS, and according to Bill, was 'very pleased with the software's performance'. He figured that if a store like Las Vegas was finding success with the software, then MITS was obviously doing something right.

After getting in contact with Colin Sherman, MITS Corporate Accounts Manager, Bill and the owners sat through a demonstration using specific ROI examples of an anonymous company's sales and inventory data, in an effort to highlight exactly how MITS is able to save users thousands of dollars. It was at this point that Bill and Senior Management agreed that based on the software's functionality, as well as the recommendation from Johnstone Las Vegas, MITS was the choice that would give Johnstone-Fresno 'the best bang for their buck'.

"We really liked the way the graphical user interface presented all of the information in a clean and easy-to-understand format," says Bill. "In addition, the tool as demonstrated was easy to use – something that was important to us, as we didn't have unlimited amounts of time to learn the ropes of another new piece of software."

PURCHASING/INSTALL

Johnstone-Fresno was also able to specify the installation time frame, a feature in which many MITS customers find value.

“There was no pressure on the part of MITS, “ Bill explained. “We were able to set our installation schedule when it was convenient for us. This prevented information overload and allowed us to gradually become comfortable with the software before moving on to additional functionality.”

To date, Johnstone-Fresno has had no major issues beyond some minor tweaks, and credits the MITS support staff for much of the smooth transition. “Peggy (Senior Product Specialist) and her group have been extremely helpful, “ Bill says. “Whether I call her on the phone or send her an email, in no time at all she responds back. And their new online training program is going to be great to get our staff up to speed on the system.”

BENEFITS

Many individuals at Johnstone-Fresno are using MITS, including senior management and sales staff, with Branch managers next in line for training. Bill and the owners use the Executive Dashboard each day to get a recap of the health of the company. The Customer Scorecard is a popular view among the sales staff, who, prior to a sales call, research their customer’s buying and trending habits, A/R balances, etc. Bill also uses the Customer Scorecard to sort invoices, a task his current ERP does not perform. This allows him to provide an analysis of the account to the customer, something they really appreciate. “The information aggregated on the Scorecards and Dashboards is truly invaluable, “ Bill says, “Not only can we quickly evaluate our sales, our customers, or our product line, MITS has eliminated the extra time and effort it took to manually retrieve this data. It frees up time to do other things, like grow our business.”

As new salespeople join Johnstone-Fresno, they are introduced to the MITS system, and they like what they see. According to Bill, one of the benefits to training users on MITS is the ability to explore the tool without ‘breaking it’. The ability to edit or modify information is included in a user’s security profile, and can be restricted to read-only. Additionally, security profiles can restrict the types of information users can view, so a Dashboard, Scorecard or report can be distributed across the company, yet only senior management, for example, would see certain sensitive financial information.

Using MITS has also prompted Johnstone-Fresno to take a closer look at their physical inventory on a more regular basis, to make sure the stocking levels synch with what the system is telling them they have available. Johnstone now sends employees out to the stores to do a hand count of the inventory, checking against the MITS numbers. “Making sure we have the correct levels of inventory on hand guards against things like unintended stock-outs” Bill says. “This ensures a smoother operation of our business.”

“I would recommend the MITS solution for a number of reasons. Number one, MITS is reliable. For an accountant, that is extremely important – to make sure things balance” Bill explains,. “And I can rely 100% on the information that comes out of MITS to be accurate and useful. Secondly, MITS makes information available at a moment’s notice - and for a business like Johnstone, this is essential to make informed decisions, especially in such a competitive market like HVACR. Finally, the time savings are so significant that for that reason alone, I would recommend the MITS product.”

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About MITS

MITS helps hundreds of distributors and manufacturers leverage the data in their ERP and other business systems to make better decisions, every day and at every level of their organization. Established in 1996, MITS’ interactive reporting and business intelligence software combines industry best practices with the flexibility to meet the unique needs of every customer. From standard to custom reports, dashboards and scorecards, MITS drives sales growth, profitability, and operational efficiency for competitive advantage.

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