



Company Profile

Miller Zell, Atlanta, GA
www.millerzell.com

Industry: Miller Zell is a leader in retail design and consulting.

Varsity Products: ShipSoft Parcel, ShipPack, ShipTalk, ShipView Plus

Shipping Volume: Up to 4000 parcels per day

Number of Shipping Locations: Two

Carriers: UPS and FedEx

ERP: Oracle, JD Edwards

Miller Zell meets the needs of its demanding retail customers by using the Varsity Logistics shipping solution to give the entire organization real time visibility into their shipping data.

Company Background

For over four decades, Miller Zell has been designing and delivering world class retail environments to the top retailers in the US and Canada. Comprised of experienced industry experts, the Miller Zell team represents all disciplines of retail, including design, store implementation, consumer insights, retail research and analysis.

Business Goals

The company's goals are to stay focused on the client's vision of success, create solutions that can quickly and cost effectively be brought to market, and make the world a better place to shop.

Challenges

With a shipping solution in place that was disconnected from the ERP application, Miller Zell found that there were far too many steps in the shipping process and many of those steps were manual which inhibited maximum efficiency. Using a third party PC based solution to produce the shipping labels, as well as UPS and FedEx on-line systems, the pertinent shipping information (tracking, weight, freight, etc.) had to be manually keyed into the back office ERP solution using up to three full time data entry people on staff at any given time. As a result, shipping confirmation was done the following day, creating delays in inventory updates. Additionally, tying carrier invoices to allocate freight costs was a time consuming task.

Solution Requirements

Understanding that the shipping system they were using was costing the company money, Gina Strickland, Miller Zell's VP of Information Technology, set out to find a solution that would streamline their process, improve efficiency, and lower costs. She got input from her IT staff, as well as Operations and Finance, and proceeded to

identify and define their key functional requirements. Two requirements that weighed heavily were that the solution be iSeries based and that it have the ability to be seamlessly integrated into the back office ERP solution – Oracle JDE.

“In addition, the company wanted to be sure the partner who provided the solution understood and was knowledgeable of the UPS compliance issues and regulations, but also had the resources and skill set to help with the integration and implementation,” states Gina.

For the staff at Miller Zell, it was imperative that the new shipping solution have the ability to be modified to meet the unique custom built packaging needs of the company. The ability to combine items into a single box and tie the order to the shipping station would reduce duplicate shipments and was a major requirement. In addition to being able to process in real time, the new solution needed to have the ability to process in batch mode.

Selection Process

Having defined and identified their requirements, Gina and the team at Miller Zell started to search for an Enterprise TMS (Transportation Management Solution) that would fit their needs at both the functional and the operational level. After learning what other companies who use iSeries ERP solutions use for shipping solutions, they decided to also investigate what other Oracle JD Edwards users deploy for an integrated shipping solution. The company also spoke to their hardware contacts at IBM and researched the Internet for IBM iSeries ISVs that had developed an iSeries-based shipping solution. After extensive scrutiny, it was decided that Varsity Logistics was a well known and highly respected TMS software provider, whose product ran natively on the IBM iSeries.

Gina adds, “All of the criteria were weighed including feature function and support, and at the end of the day the Varsity shipping software addressed all of our requirements, but also had the ability to be customized.” The company did their due diligence and was sure to call and visit some of the Varsity customers. Varsity, as a vendor, was apparently well versed in the shipping industry and received high marks for support from all of their clients.

Implementation

Varsity Logistics, Inc. was able to provide a full suite of professional services including installation, setup, testing, training, customization, and project management. Miller Zell depended on and received from Varsity the support it required, not only for the installation setup and training, but for unique enhancements related to their custom packaging requirements.

Varsity Logistics worked with the Miller Zell team to execute a full solution implementation within 90 days of the start of the project. Chris Anderson, President of Varsity Logistics, states, “Varsity Solutions has a talented staff of experienced and dedicated people, who were able to implement a solution for Miller Zell assuring them the best parcel shipping service at the lowest possible cost.”

Results and Benefits

As a result of Miller Zell's deployment of Varsity Logistics shipping solutions, the company has reduced their shipping errors and increased accuracy on their shipping charges. With the ability to view historical shipping information, the organization was also able to analyze various shipping strategies.

Gina states, "Our Company has been able to streamline our shipping process, eliminate manual entry and reduce our cost significantly, and visibility to online tracking information has enhanced the customer service experience."

The integration to their backend ERP solution, Oracle/JD Edwards, proved to be invaluable as it provided the staff with timely updates for freight and order confirmations and relief of inventory.

As an industry leader, Miller Zell continually strives to provide its customers the highest quality of service, whether it's in the design of the shopping environment or in the delivery of the product. Varsity Logistics has been able to provide the company with the tools to maintain that level of customer service.