



CASE STUDY



>> DESIGNED FOR INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTORS



HARBOR PLUMBING & HEATING SUPPLY



Growing a Supply House from the Ground Up - Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply Relies on the DDi System to Run its Operations

As a plumbing industry veteran, Bill Morea surprised none of his peers when he decided to strike out on his own and start his own supply house in 2000. Based in Mamaroneck, NY, Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply is a traditional wholesaler of plumbing and heating products. Since the company's inception, revenues continue to grow exponentially, even during economic slowdown, and its workforce continues to expand.

Morea is quite the distribution technology guru and fully understands the impact of technology on the success of a business. Prior to owning his business, Morea used a system from a well-known distribution giant but immediately saw the disadvantages of their system for a small supply house. "Without a doubt, we had a top notch system but it was not ideal for smaller companies that need more customization to work efficiently," he said. "When I started Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply, I needed a solution that could have us up and running immediately, and with instant results." According to Morea, his previous company only utilized 10% of the operating capacity of the larger distribution package. "For a system that expensive, it didn't make sense to even remotely consider it."

According to Morea, the system from DDi was tailor made for Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply. "After viewing the DDi demo, I was delighted with the solution's ease of use, and intelligent operating system. In addition, the installation process was a breeze. Out of the box, I immediately knew we could utilize 60-70 percent of the system. DDi offered me the perfect combination of comprehensive functionality with ease of use to shorten the learning curve for new employees to be up and running quickly."



Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply realized a wide range of benefits from the DDi System including access to critical information on customers, vendors, and products with a touch of a keystroke. Plus, the ability to view profitable products, as well as customer sales and custom reporting were another bonus. "With the software automating much of the processes, management can focus on business development, instead of being bogged down with admin work," said Morea. "The amount of transactions processed each month grows exponentially. Now, month ends are much easier than when we first started and the system has taken much of the pressure off of me." Morea also values the capability to access the system remotely from home or on the road so he can double check an order to ensure that all items were entered correctly.

Morea has also been one of the early adopters to optimize DDi's new electronic signature capture to digitally imprint proof-of-delivery signatures on customer invoices. Signature Capture eliminates multi-part, dot matrix sales order forms and tedious, time consuming filing. "DDi System has transformed us into a virtually

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paperless operation and speeds our invoice processing and control materials by storing the signatures on file. We can send signed copies to a customer electronically to eliminate postage. The faster we send a customer an invoice, the quicker we are paid,” Morea said.

In terms of technical support, DDi was far superior to the previous larger distribution software package and the response times are instant with call backs within five minutes. “With DDi, they can connect directly into our system and diagnose any problems in real-time,” Morea added. To keep employees up-to-date on new versions of the system, DDi offers on-going training classes to its customers.

With the DDi system as the backbone of its operations, Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply has grown from a 4,000 sq. ft. facility to an 18,000 sq. ft. building. “We are continually adding workstations and offices to grow our business,” Morea added. “Expansion has been a seamless process with DDi.”

In the future, Harbor Plumbing and Heating Supply is exploring barcoding its inventory. Presently, Morea and his staff manually input each item into inventory and barcoding would provide an automated warehouse system. As Harbor expands its operations with a newly opened showroom, they are confident that the DDi Software will enable them to grow with only minimal increases in staff.



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