Wire Forms
Made2Manage® ERP

Wire Forms' Customer Service Pops with the Made2Manage Enterprise Portal M2M VIP

Wire Forms is an integral manufacturer of fabricated point-of-purchase (POP) and store fixture display products. Located in Balch Springs, Texas, the company has designed and manufactured displays since 1976 for some of the best-known retailers in the United States. The industries it serves include baking, cosmetics, sporting goods, and automotive battery products, to name a few.

As users of the Made2Manage Enterprise Business System, Wire Forms was delighted to discover that this same company could provide them with an affordable e-commerce solution: The Made2Manage Enterprise Portal — M2M VIP.

M2M VIP provides a personalized, secured area on Wire Forms' website where key customers, sales reps and distributors can interact with the company 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere in the world. It features limited Web-based access to the manufacturer's back-office data so that the user can, among other things, get quotes, place orders, check order status and exchange product specification documents. These interactions occur synchronously in real time, empowering Wire Forms and its customers alike with an effective communications tool.

A Clear Choice

When Wire Forms went looking for a way to conduct business on the Internet, like most manufacturers, it wanted the functionality of e-commerce without the associated cost. "We checked on several e-commerce solutions and the cost was outrageous," says Bob Leader, the systems administrator for Wire Forms. "M2M VIP is very affordable."

With M2M VIP, the company did not have to buy any software or hardware or hire technical people to maintain the system. It simply pays a low subscription fee, and Consona keeps the site up and running.

Wire Forms already had the Made2Manage Enterprise Business System in place when it implemented M2M VIP. This integration with the existing database meant that personalized customer and sales rep M2M VIP sites could be up and running in a matter of hours, not months, without requiring a large up-front investment. M2M VIP's integration with the Made2Manage back-office also minimizes the investment in maintenance required to keep data accurate and flowing between the two systems. The fact that Wire Forms would have to deal with just one company for support issues, rather than four or five, was also a big advantage.

Consona™

Convenience and Control

Wire Forms has been using M2M VIP since August of 2000. Its customers can easily access information by a familiar point-and-click browser interface on the Wire Forms home page. "Our customers can get all the information they would normally have to pick up the phone and call for," says Leader. "They can enter their sales orders, check on inventory status, check their invoicing, shop around and look at different products and pricing. Everything is immediate. It's real time and really convenient for them."

Leader continues, "Customers have a sense of control over their access to the information. They get it when they need it, without having to leave messages and wait for phone calls to be returned."

While customers can control the time at which information is retrieved, Wire Forms has ultimate control over access to its database by being able to specify individual views of customer accounts, access rights and privileges. "We have the power to allow them to see what they need to see, but from their point of view, they still have control," says Leader. "The M2M VIP site ensures the highest security levels, responding only to requests from users who have been authenticated based on their login."

Everyone Benefits

The feedback that Wire Forms has received from its customers has already been very positive. "They absolutely love it," says Leader.

One of their customers purchases bakery racks, which Wire Forms builds and distributes for them. This customer had a lot of problems in the past waiting to be called back to find out if their racks had been shipped and what the PO number was. "Now 99.99 percent of their questions are answered through the VIP site," says Leader.

Wire Forms has realized some internal benefits as well. Having customers enter their own orders has saved the company time. They no longer have to wait for a phone call and fax from the customer. This has the added advantage of reducing the number of manual errors, since the customer enters orders only once.

Wire Forms responsibilities regarding order entry are minimized to reviewing the order and modifying the status. Cost-wise, the company has seen a reduction in long-distance charges from phone calls and faxes, as well as savings on paper costs.

Customized Solutions Part of the System

According to Leader, Consona has been very willing to work with Wire Forms in customizing the M2M VIP site for ease of use by Wire Form customers. "They are very receptive to complaints and comments and are curious to know what we like and what we need changed. If it's doable, they'll tell me when it will be done, and if it's not doable, they'll come up with another solution," says Leader.

There have been several instances in which Wire Forms has requested modifications to the system, and M2M VIP has been able to integrate them all. For example: customers wanted the current day's date to be the default date on the order portion. This saves the customer the step of entering a date unless it needs to be later than today's date. This default date flows automatically to the "ship item" date and eliminates a duplicate entry in this portion of the order.

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— *Bob Leader*
Systems Administrator
Wire Forms

A similar situation arose regarding a "ship to" address. Wire Forms' customers wanted their address to come up as the default address for each item they ordered. M2M VIP made the change, saving time and reducing errors both for Wire Forms and its customers. "M2M VIP is just awesome as far as working with us and following through on support, answering questions, and fixing problems and preferences." Leader says there are many other preferences that M2M VIP is working on implementing for them in the near future. "I don't see any better solution if you're trying to get into e-commerce," says Leader.

Looking Forward

With the increasing popularity of e-commerce, Wire Forms is keenly aware that customers are just a mouse click away from the competition. Leader believes that the M2M VIP site provides such a valuable service to his customers that they become hooked on its convenience and responsiveness. "They know they can find their information anytime they want," says Leader. "We're not hiding anything from them. It just empowers them and makes them feel more comfortable doing business with us. It's really a hook for us to keep their business."

He anticipates that several more customers will be using M2M VIP in the near future. "Everybody's big on the concept of Internet and e-commerce. M2M VIP is a tool for us to try to get more customers. It shows them that keeping up with technology is a top priority for us."