

ALF CURTIS GAINS OPERATION

HOME IMPROVEMENTS EFFICIENCY THROUGHOUT ITS WITH ACTIVANT CATALYST

ALF CURTIS HOME IMPROVEMENTS INC.



Executive Summary

Alf Curtis Home Improvements, a lumber and building materials dealer in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, has been providing a wide range of services and products to contractors since 1975. Recently, they migrated from Activant ECS Pro to Activant Catalyst to streamline operations in order to gain efficiencies throughout the company. In

just a short time, Alf Curtis has saved significant labor time on price changes and cost adjustments, eliminated daily invoice filing, and reduced special order handling time by ten minutes per order.

From ECS Pro to Catalyst

Alf Curtis is a full-service dealer, supplying aluminum products, siding, roofing, windows and doors, lumber, drywall, etc. while also offering installation services, delivery and construction take offs. From a small garage cash and carry business in 1975, Alf Curtis has grown to a 42,000 square foot warehouse, 1,400 square foot showroom on 18 acres, with a second location in Lindsay, Ontario.

The third-generation family-owned business relied on an Activant ECS Pro system to run their operation for many years. But their needs eventually surpassed the system's capabilities. "We wanted a system that would automatically track work-in-progress for our installed sales. We decided to migrate to Activant Catalyst," explains Brent Perry, manager at Alf Curtis.

Exceptional Execution of Implementation and Go-Live

The familiar Windows interface made the transition to Catalyst easy and employees quickly embraced the new system. "We had a great implementation team and right from go-live, everything was operational," remarks Brent. "Our sales people love the different tabs and the ability to have two or three order screens open at the same time. Even our least computer literate employees easily navigate through Catalyst menus. Overall the project took less than five months from beginning to end."

Quickly Changing Costs and Prices

In addition to the user-friendly interface, Catalyst provides new functionality. One example is improved price change capabilities. Prior to Catalyst, Alf Curtis could only change prices one at a time. Now, the Alf Curtis staff can change prices all at once. "If I want to do a 2,000 item price change, it is done with a minimal number of keystrokes," describes Brent. "It's

PROFILE

Headquarters: Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

Sales Breakdown: 90% contractor, 10% retail

Number of Employees: 60-70

Locations: 2

Founded: 1975

Affiliation: Castle Building Centers

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BRENT PERRY
MANAGER

ALF CURTIS HOME IMPROVEMENTS, INC.

done in five minutes instead of four hours. Catalyst makes it easier to change prices and frees up a lot of time to do other important activities.”

Cost adjustments are also as simple as the price changes. “If lumber is keyed in incorrectly at \$270 per thousand on the PO, and the bill two weeks later shows that it’s \$280 per thousand, we can fix it quickly through AP/PO,” asserts Brent. “The system automatically changes the cost on every sales transaction and adjusts the average cost. We used to have to do a lot of manual spreadsheet work to calculate cost. It’s a great feature! Today, our buyers have more time to do what they’re supposed to be doing—buying material.”

Reducing Both Errors and Processing Time for Special Orders

Alf Curtis also streamlined special ordering using Catalyst Business Process Management (BPM). “Our special order form would go through several employees before it reached the buyer, increasing the chance for error with every hand off. Today with BPM, our sales person keys the order into the system and the system automatically notifies the buyer. It even forces the buyer to review the PO to ensure we don’t forget to send something to the vendor. When the material arrives, both the buyer and the sales person receive an automatic notification,” explains Brent. “Catalyst eliminates the possibility of lost orders and we’re saving an average ten minutes per special order. That’s really important for us because 25 percent of our business is special orders.”

Eliminating Paper and Labor Hours with Document Management

Another critical area of improved efficiency is in the back office with Activant Document Management. “It used to take us a day and a half to mail statements every month,” notes Brent. “Now they are prepared by the system and we don’t waste time filing and sorting because our documents are stored electronically. We save at least 20 to 25 hours every month with Document Management.”

Improving Installed Sales Tracking

Installed Sales is a complex service that requires excellent materials management. And that’s now possible with Catalyst Installed Sales. “We record all the material that goes into a job, track a work-in-progress, and bill per the terms of the job rather than when material ships. We couldn’t do that before,” says Brent. “It works just like we need it to.”

What’s Next for Alf Curtis

Alf Curtis has only touched the surface of what they will be able to do with Catalyst. “It’s a matter of fine tuning and finding out what more the system can do for us,” concludes Brent. “The system has really benefited us, and I’m glad we switched. I strongly recommend Catalyst.”

Alf Curtis has just begun to roll out the Dispatch and Delivery Management System with integrated GPS tracking to streamline their order process along with the Performance Driver dashboard system which will drive timely information needed to adapt to a changing marketplace. The next step will be to give their customers access to their information with iNet.



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**BRENT PERRY
MANAGER**

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ABOUT ACTIVANT

Activant, a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses, offers customers tailored proprietary software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics. Activant’s systems are designed to help customers increase sales, boost productivity, operate more cost-efficiently, improve inventory turns and enhance trading partner relationships.

**To learn more about this or other
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