

Acumatica Helps Lighting Manufacturer Improve Processes, Scale Rapidly



OVERVIEW

FSC Lighting Inc. began as a fluorescent lighting manufacturer, later expanding to include LED lighting with emphasis on controls, automation and energy efficiency. Projects range from commercial lighting to industrial parking garages and beyond. To benefit the local economy and surrounding community, FSC's 30-person manufacturing operation is supported onsite by 10 adults with developmental disabilities and up to 200 offsite from Pomona Valley Workshop. For decades, the company ran on tribal knowledge and Sage DacEasy, which wasn't set up properly, lacked accountability and couldn't scale as the company grew. FSC Lighting chose Acumatica for its flexible, scalable, cloud-based ERP and excellent value.

KEY RESULTS

- Better control of inventory
- Dramatically reduced invoicing time
- Straightforward, comprehensive reporting
- Multiple entity capabilities
- Mobile access makes on-the-go approvals easy

SITUATION

"FSC Lighting has a very complex supply chain, with vendors based all over the world, but our company was running on processes that were established, as far as I can tell, about 1990," says John Watkins, CEO of FSC Lighting. "We employed a variety of very inefficient paper processes that were onerous, difficult to manage, and almost impossible to track from an inventory and production management standpoint."

When Chad Treadwell, Vice President of Operations, joined FSC Lighting, the company was poorly operating with Sage DacEasy, and it was a nightmare, he says. "DacEasy was an older system... and it didn't incorporate MRP and warehouse management and the rest of the manufacturing process. There were no inventory locations, and there wasn't any accountability. The warehouse manager would bring us a list of things he thought we might be low on, maybe, to order."

In addition, he says, "a lot of items were ordered under miscellaneous part numbers; things were really put together with rubber bands and tape and it worked because the company has a lot of tribal knowledge. But as we started to grow, we found ourselves becoming out of stock on items and scrambling to keep up with customer orders. We needed a system that would allow us to scale our business from a very manual operation to an automated operation."

Before Treadwell, the company had purchased a Sage replacement for DacEasy but had not implemented it yet. He quickly rejected it. "The version wasn't robust enough for our business," he says. "It was only a replacement for DacEasy. I had launched Sage before and decided it was older technology and a bit clunky. I wanted to find something we could do in the cloud, add an ERP and barcode scanning, and then add on from there."

SOLUTION

After some research, Treadwell found Irvine-based consultancy firm Klear Systems Inc., which introduced FSC to Acumatica. "FSC needed a solution that would help them get organized and into this century," says Kimberly Tucker, Business Development Manager at Klear Systems. "Chad's vision for FSC involved a system that was modern, intuitive and very easy to use. He was really impressed with Acumatica's cloud-based, highly open and flexible approach. FSC also chose to implement JAAS Advanced Manufacturing Software (JAMS) and automate inventory and shipping processes with Scanco Warehouse for Acumatica, so the entire FSC operation now flows through Acumatica in real time."

Company

FSC Lighting
www.fsclighting.com

Industry

Manufacturing

Location

Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Products

- Acumatica Financial Management
- Acumatica Distribution Management
- Acumatica Manufacturing Management

Says Treadwell, “We interviewed many different resellers. Because we move very fast as a company, we needed somebody that was going to be flexible, someone that we enjoyed working with, and that was going to go the extra mile for us. Klear Systems was very responsive to our needs.”

“The process to implement Acumatica was actually very quick,” he reports. “We started in October and launched live in January. Klear Systems made that happen for us.”

The partner “has been fantastic since go live, being very available and actively working with us on adding new modules,” adds Treadwell. “They’re great and very quick to make changes I’ve asked if I needed a different setup.”

BENEFITS

Better Control of Inventory

Because FSC Lighting is a nearly 50-year old company, Watkins and Treadwell streamlined many of the company’s processes as part of its Acumatica implementation. “Before Acumatica, our version of checking inventory was a sales guy running to the warehouse to ask how many units we had,” Treadwell says. “Having Acumatica, JAMS, and Scanco integrated allows us to manage all our inventory from a single location. We can easily look it up in the system and have confidence that it’s accurate.”

Previously, the warehouse manager kept all sales orders, purchase orders and other paperwork out in the warehouse, and would match the paperwork with inbound receipts. “Now, he has a dashboard and he can see items instantly when they come in and receive orders right into the warehouse,” Treadwell says.

Acumatica takes the guesswork out of production. Since the warehouse manager was often the only person who knew where things were, if he were absent, finding items took time. “He was really the only person that knew where everything was,” Treadwell says. “Now we have locationbased picking so anyone can bring the product into manufacturing.”

In addition, he says, “If an item was missing from a certain order, someone would just grab one, which meant inventory was off. Now, inventory is accurate and true and we have policies in place so people don’t do that, so our inventory counts have improved dramatically and we have confidence that it is properly decremented as products are built.”

Greatly Improved, Faster Invoicing

FSC Lighting has cut its invoicing time from as many as five days to a mere 20 minutes, Treadwell says. The previously manual process was cumbersome, and involved many steps, including following paperwork as it traveled through the warehouse and manufacturing process. “Now it’s automatically done each day,” he says. “Acumatica has brought us so much more control over our business. There were times before when invoices were missed all together and that just doesn’t happen anymore.”

Says Holly Pugno, Director of Operations for FSC Lighting, “I am loving working with Acumatica. We joke that we were in the 19th century and now we’ve come to the 21st century!”

Straightforward, Comprehensive Reporting

“Reporting is fantastic in Acumatica,” Treadwell says. “Recently when a salesman and I were looking something up, we pulled it up immediately because finding information in Acumatica is relatively straightforward and simple. He said to me, ‘You realize what you just did would have taken us six hours in the old system.’ That’s just one of Acumatica’s tremendous benefits. It’s a matter of just clicking a couple of buttons, and we can get every piece of data we’re looking for.”



“Having Acumatica integrated with Manufacturing allows us to manage all our inventory from a single location. We can easily look it up in the system and have confidence that it’s accurate.”

– Chad Treadwell,
Vice President of Operations
FSC Lighting

Multiple Entity Capabilities and Mobility

Treadwell deployed Acumatica in his remote contract warehouse in Chicago as well as Pomona Valley Workshop's facilities so he can drop ship from either location. Acumatica's ability to handle multiple entities also allowed FSC to use the software with its joint venture partner in Taiwan.

Watkins has enjoyed Acumatica's mobility in his business travels. "The iPhone app has been super beneficial because I am in the building maybe 20% of the time. I'm able to go through all my approvals from POs coming inbound to our POs going outbound and approve all those on-the-fly," he says.

Overall, FSC Lighting is incredibly pleased with all aspects of Acumatica. "It's an affordable solution with an unlimited user base," Treadwell says. "We wanted to control costs upfront so we paid for the software upfront. We had heard about other vendors who get you in and then crank up the price later, but Acumatica doesn't do that."

With DacEasy and its manual systems, FSC Lighting couldn't grow, Treadwell said. "Acumatica and the processes we are developing are helping us double our sales without doubling our staff. The idea of being handcuffed to tribal knowledge is also going away. Before we had a hard time keeping up with growth, and now we can meet increasing customer demand."

"We needed something very flexible, in the cloud, and over-all, something that was a good value for us. And we found that in Acumatica."

