

lumberTrack™

Case Study



Alan McIlvain Company

The Alan McIlvain Company has provided its customers in Pennsylvania with hardwood lumber products for more than two centuries. Founded in Marcus Hook, PA in 1798, the company's longevity is a testament to how seven generations of the McIlvain family have kept the company growing and successful by being in tune with their customers' needs.

Today, the Alan McIlvain Company continues to thrive, based on its long-standing commitment to provide outstanding knowledge, skill and quality products, and also offer customers more value. With the latter especially in mind, the Alan McIlvain Company installed Progressive Solutions' lumberTrack software in early 2007 to improve customer responsiveness and service.

lumberTrack is the top-selling software solution for the wood product industry. By centralizing inventory management, integrating sales orders, purchasing, production and customer delivery data to automatically update inventory information, lumberTrack provides accurate and real-time inventory. As a result, the order status for each and every order is available to lumberTrack users—from the front office, to mobile users in the Alan McIlvain yard.

"We looked at all the other systems, and it wasn't a hard decision," recalls Lan McIlvain, Inside Sales with the Alan McIlvain Company. "lumberTrack just seemed the best to us, and has the best reputation."

"Before, we couldn't look up individual bundles to tell a customer what exact widths or lengths would be in a bundle without calling out to the yard," Lan recalls. "Orders were printed on paper and someone had to come to the office to pick up orders. Sometimes there were write-up errors; sometimes orders would get lost."

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"lumberTrack helps me close orders faster. The orders get out to the yard a lot faster, so it shortens our lead time. It cuts down on the number of mistakes. And we can sell before inventory is coming out of the kiln, which is a big advantage."

—Lan McIlvain, *Inside Sales*

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Alan McIlvain Company...continued.

"lumberTrack has made it easier for Alan McIlvain's sales team to provide great customer service, and also sell more profitably, by closing orders faster and pre-selling inventory still in the kiln.

"We can tell a customer whether or not we have the stock to do an order right there while they're on the phone, and get the customer what he wants faster. We have a lot more detail in our inventory to see individual bundles rather than just bulk volume."

Once an order is placed, lumberTrack automatically provides the order information, allocates and updates inventory and creates work orders and shipping documentation. "Orders get out to the yard a lot faster, so it shortens our lead time," Lan says. "They're starting orders very shortly after they're entered.

"lumberTrack is also much more accurate than the error-prone paper-based system they used previously." Lan says "It's much better now, and there are fewer complaints. There's an audit trail with everything so you can always go back and track what was done."

lumberTrack's extensive reporting capabilities allow Lan and his staff to generate reports easily and quickly, helping to keep costs in line. "We have ten times more data than we ever used to have. We can look at things from a much different angle now. We used to go blind on what our costs were. Now we can go back and audit every single job in millwork, see what our waste is and know what things are really costing us."

"Recent changes in the economy have prompted Alan McIlvain's customers to be more demanding when it comes to their orders; lumberTrack has given the company an advantage in keeping customers happy. "We can certainly answer questions faster. We have a much more detailed view of our inventory. The orders have gotten a lot more complicated now. A lot of people are not equipped probably as well as we are to deal with increasingly difficult orders."

Further, monitoring their sales volumes is easier and more real-time than before. "Instead of waiting until the end of the month to see how we did, we can look up and see how much we sold on a particular day and where we stand in the month. That's a nice thing."

As for anyone else in the wood product industry considering lumberTrack, Lan adds "I've taken people on tours here looking at lumberTrack. I'd always highly recommend it." ■

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—Lan McIlvain, Inside Sales

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