



ACC Accounting Solutions

by Liz Hunter; Photo by Jeff Anderson

Paving a Path to Success: ACC Accounting Solutions helps CST Products become more efficient through an ERP software system.

Since 2007, the South Jersey regional manufacturing facility for CST Products has been growing in demand. One of three regional plants, this Penns Grove location manufactures and inventories its own interlocking pavers and blocks for retaining walls to ensure color consistency, prompt shipping and regionalized customer service. In late 2012, however, CST's corporate comptroller Neil Johnson saw how the company's accounting software system was holding them back and boxing them into a certain way of doing things, so he went

in search of something that would make their business more efficient, without going over budget.

When Johnson set out on researching his options, he had some key factors in mind: The system couldn't be too large that it would be unmanageable, it couldn't cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it needed to be able to grow with the company. "We found that Sage was the best fit for our needs," says Johnson, "and Sage recommended ACC Accounting Solutions as a seasoned, local implementation partner. Ever since we met with ACC, it's just been a tremendous change for the better."

Founded in 1996, ACC Accounting Solutions is a software consulting firm that partners with some of the most well-known business-related software names in the industry, and is a Sage-endorsed authorized partner.

The ACC team spent two days at CST, learning the departments and business flow. "We looked at how the company was set up and created a framework of how they can take the Sage system to make their business processes stronger and accounting processes faster," says Sean Atkins, founder of ACC.

CST has been most impressed with the Sage inventory model. John Blais, CST's plant engineer, works daily with the inventory aspect of the new accounting software. "Before, we were working in DOS mode, and now we're using Windows," he says. "It used to require three people to input our daily manufacturing numbers into the system, and now it only takes one. In addition to that, once the information is put in, we can download it automatically to update our inventory records. Our records are more accurate and the system processes the information much better than what we had previously."

Johnson says, “We never had something this accurate. We can import our daily production seamlessly into the system and the software communicates with other levels of the company, like customer service, so we immediately know what is available for sale.”

The company’s historical data was also imported into the new system, which meant they didn’t need to re-key anything from scratch, says Johnson. Additionally, the new software has helped CST go paperless.

Johnson says one of the things he appreciated most about working with ACC was the fact that they were cognitive of his budget throughout the process. “He wasn’t trying to sell us on the extra bells and whistles that we didn’t need,” he says. “If he noticed that a particular process would put us over budget, he suggested other methods, and that’s something unheard of. He was comforting to me and my staff and helped us prepare for any potential hiccups because he’s been through it all.”

As CST grows, Sage and ACC offer add-ons and accessories that will continue to improve the company’s efficiency. “When they are ready, the system is there to grow with them,” says Atkins. “You don’t need to purchase everything up front. These modules and added functions can be implemented incrementally.”

Since going live on the new software system last February, the relationship between CST and ACC is something Johnson appreciates. “The staff was hesitant to change at first, but the fact that Sean and his team were always available helped make things go more smoothly,” says Johnson. “No matter what questions we had, they never lost patience with us. Since then, when we have a problem, we always get a voice on the other line.” ACC uses a remote desktop tool to log onto the computer and walk the CST employee through what they are doing so they can watch and learn, which Johnson says has been so helpful.

“It’s like we’re sitting there over their shoulder and helping them,” says Atkins. “It reduces what would have otherwise been a long support call on both ends.”

Johnson says ACC’s local presence was also a factor in his decision. “ACC provides a local training facility and offers classes throughout the year, so as we grow and add on, we have the ability to send employees to their facility for training. Not many software companies offer that, and it’s something we’re definitely going to take advantage of,” he says.

Blais says, “I feel like we were stuck with our previous system, but now we have the foundation to move forward for today’s business world, like the ability for online ordering or adding bar codes. There’s no limit to where we can go.”

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Caption: ACC Accounting Solutions founder Sean Atkins (left) with CST Products plant engineer John Blais