



ezcom Case Study

Client:

B&R Plastics

Denver, CO

Janet Kulzer, National Sales Manager

The Company

B&R Plastics is a custom molder and injection molding company, based in Denver. For more than 36 years, the privately owned company has manufactured a variety of products, including its own line of plastic tableware, such as cups, bowls, and pitchers, aimed at recreational vehicle (RV) owners and campers, as well as three sizes of folding stepstools.

B&R sells to distributors in the RV market who, in turn, sell to resellers. The company also sells its products in the retail channel through a wide variety of chain stores such as Ace Hardware, True Value Hardware, Camping World, Fred Meyer, Meijer, and , and other grocery stores, as well as mail order catalogues. "While we do a relatively big volume in sales, we're a small company," says Janet Kulzer, B&R's national sales manager.

The Challenge

B&R was able to meet its customers' requirement and grow steadily. Then, it hit the jackpot and landed its largest client, a nationwide retail chain of superstores, predominantly

selling quality household merchandise and furnishings. Overnight, B&R faced a major challenge: "Everybody wants to have a large customer like that. It's the crown on your head. But the crown can also be a headache if you're not prepared to do business the way they want you to do business," Kulzer says. Like many large retailers, the NASDAQ-traded retailer had instituted a specific electronic data interchange (EDI) system to order products from manufacturers and distributors like B&R, and to receive shipment of those products at the chain's 800 stores throughout North America. "They asked us to print out shipping barcode labels that they designed for their specific need. They also wanted us to send them advance shipping notifications (ASNs) and invoices in their preferred EDI formats," says Kulzer. However the biggest challenge for B&R was the retailer's requirement of drop shipping its products to every one of its 800 stores nationwide.

"We weren't prepared," Kulzer says. This came as a major shock to B&R; after all, it was already using a competitor's EDI solution, which worked moderately well, as long as the company did not have a major client like the nationwide retailer. But when faced with the challenge of meeting its additional requirements,

B&R's logistical operations virtually ground to a halt. "The other EDI solution allowed us to create labels and ASNs but it was a slow, slow process," says Kulzer. "I participated in the day-to-day process so I could see what was happening."

What she found was nothing short of an EDI nightmare. Fulfilling shipments for any given order took seven steps and 20 minutes. Kulzer says she would sit at her desk, drumming her fingers on the desktop while waiting for the software to finish its task. "I

"It got to the point where we dreaded running EDI because we were afraid of how many orders we'd have that day..."

couldn't help but think about all the lost time slipping through my fingertips."

In order to meet this retailer's requirements, B&R initially hired extra people to sit at a computer, entering orders, printing labels and filling out ASNs

all day long. Even then, the company could only ship product to 75 stores a day, less than 10 percent of this premier customer's total count. And that didn't even include B&R's other customers.

"It got to the point where we dreaded running EDI because we were afraid of how many orders we'd have that day. You're only successful inasmuch as the level of service you provide. After all the effort we put into landing this large retailer as an

The Challenge continued

account, our concern was that they might think we were too small to do business with if we could not deliver." Kulzer says.

Then came the final straw: the nationwide retailer sent B&R promotional orders for the chain's 800 stores; B&R, however, never received it. The EDI solution B&R was using at the time lost the orders. "Our customer came to us, looking for shipment tracking numbers for the orders, and we didn't have them. We were talking about \$300,000 worth of store orders. They were calling and asking 'where's the order,' and telling us we were looking at fines and compliance charge backs for the loss of sales."

Kulzer and B&R realized they needed to make an immediate change. They selected eZCom's Lingo™, a managed EDI software as a service solution.

The Solution: Lingo

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B&R called its largest retail client, determined to prevent a repeat...one, that could cost them the account. They discussed their concerns with the EDI manager, who in turn recommended eZCom.

Lingo is a leading EDI application that functions like an e-commerce passport, supplying an easy browser

interface designed around individual companies' trading needs. It empowers companies to converse with any trading partner, regardless of formats or communication languages, managing multiple trading relationships and e-commerce standards with the click of a mouse. Lingo's unparalleled ease of use

"Lingo is phenomenal; what used to take us an entire day, Lingo now allows us to do in an hour."

removes operational complexities that could lead to potential errors and charge backs.

Kulzer asked for a demonstration, not believing that Lingo could deliver everything her eZCom representative said it could do. She was skeptical, but was amazed when she saw it in action: "Lingo did everything she said, and more," Kulzer says. "Lingo is phenomenal; what used to take us an entire day, Lingo now allows us to do in an hour."

Lingo has made the shipping process a snap at B&R, according to Kulzer. One person, she says, can produce all of the labels needed for our customer in a fraction of the time needed before, as well as the company's 200 other customers. "All it takes is the click of a button... you don't have that downtime of waiting," she says. "Click, it does it; click, it does it; click; it does it. It's ten times faster." Kulzer was also favorably impressed by Lingo's pricing. She notes

using eZCom has both beneficially quantifiable, as well as qualitative effects, on B&R. "We haven't had to hire an additional person at \$30,000 a year; those are costs we don't have to build into our pricing." More importantly, Lingo allows B&R to keep its customers happy. "Before, some of our customers had to sit for days while we worked on shipments for our largest customer, and they didn't like that. You can't put a cost on preserving customer relationships," she notes.

The Future

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"I love eZCom. They saved the day for us," says Kulzer. "Now, when we get into work in the morning, nobody dreads getting on the EDI system, regardless of how many orders there are. We know we can get them done in a day. It's not a big deal."

More importantly, B&R is looking to grow its business again, instead of merely hoping to fulfill the orders it currently has. "You always worry about getting more accounts, when you're thinking how can I handle them, too, because my antiquated program won't let me do the job.

"Thanks to eZCom and Lingo, I don't have to worry about that any more."

