



Company Profile

Chicago Faucets, Des Plaines, IL
<http://www.chicagofaucets.com/>

Industry: Faucet Manufacturer and Distributor

Varsity Products: ShipSoft-Parcel, ShipPack, ShipSoft-Freight, ShipSelect, ShipAudit, FreightAudit

Shipping Volume: 400 parcel shipments per day; 100 freight shipments per day

Number of Shipping Locations: One

Carriers: UPS

ERP: Oracle JD Edwards World.

"With seamless integration, a toolset that's feature rich and flexible, and major cost savings in consulting time and maintenance, Varsity has proven to be a tremendous asset to Chicago Faucets as a business and to the dealers and consumers we serve."

—Al Silverstein, IT Director

Chicago Faucets Increases Throughput and Accuracy with Varsity Solutions

Founded in 1901, Chicago Faucets supplies commercial faucet products nationally and internationally via authorized sales representatives and a network of hundreds of distributors. This family owned business built its success over the next hundred years, and in 2002 became part of the Geberit Group, a global provider in the area of sanitary technology with sales of approx. \$1.5 billion and 5,200 employees in approximately 40 countries worldwide.

In the late 90s the company looked to replace their legacy Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, and decided to migrate to JD Edwards World in order to become Y2K compliant. On a parallel path, a separate IT team was in the process of implementing a carrier provided, PC-based shipping and manifest system that the company had purchased two years earlier. Once both solutions were installed and in production, issues began to arise.

While JD Edwards World worked very well for the company, the PC-based shipping system posed challenges. "When the system was up, it worked fine, but we began to experience downtime that interrupted our shipping day and service to our customers and dealers," said Al Silverstein, IT Director at Chicago Faucets. "Because the system was written in a language that my IT team wasn't familiar with, we had to bring consultants to our facility to fix issues and get us back up and running. Not only was this inconvenient and slow, but it was also expensive."

To add to the challenges, the PC-based system did not integrate well with JD Edwards World. "Communications between the two platforms wasn't good," stated Silverstein. "Also, around this same time, Microsoft was releasing a major new operating system – our PC shipping system didn't support the new O/S so we couldn't take advantage of the features that the new O/S offered."

After two years of facing and developing workarounds to these various challenges, Chicago Faucets was purchased by Geberit. This provided the company with an opportunity to switch shipping systems. "We definitely needed something more reliable and easier to maintain," stated Silverstein. With experience working with the iSeries platform, Chicago Faucets' IT team decided to research the iSeries-based shipping systems on the market. "We wanted to run everything on the iSeries – that's where our skill set was and is. And once we started looking at the solutions out there, the decision was a no-brainer." After seeing the product in action, the shipping staff, Director of Logistics, and IT team made their choice. Chicago Faucets chose Varsity's core product solutions for automated parcel and freight shipping. Additionally, they selected ShipPack to capture item-level detail during the packing process and reconcile packed items against the pick ticket, ShipSelect to optimize carrier selection, and the Varsity parcel and freight auditing modules to reconcile actual invoices against anticipated costs.

Silverstein stated, "Varsity is stable, sophisticated, and seamlessly integrated with JD Edwards World – the integration with World is dramatically better than what we had before. To top it off, the maintenance costs for Varsity solutions are significantly lower than what we were paying for our PC-based carrier provided system -- about one third the cost." Additionally, Chicago Faucets gained the ability to automatically generate International documentation, which saved the company notable time and trouble.

Chicago Faucets worked with Varsity's Professional Services staff on the installation. "We needed a fair amount of customization – screens, options, defaults, a Ship With Other Goods option, and others. Varsity was flexible enough to include what we needed in order to fit our shipping processes," said Silverstein.

The results have been significant. "With Varsity, we have *no* downtime," asserts Silverstein. Not only was the system more reliable, but anytime Chicago Faucets needs to make changes to the system, the IT staff can make them. "The system is easy to use and easy to manipulate – we have a lot more flexibility to add carriers or handle any exceptional shipping situations that might come up – and we don't have to be at the mercy of outside consultants and their schedules."

What's more, the company has increased its order throughput from 100 packages per day to over 400 per day. And with the addition of a blind scan step to their shipping process – a feature provided in ShipPack that enables total visibility to the contents of each package, "...our parcel shipping accuracy is virtually perfect," stated Silverstein. "ShipPack also gives us the ability to automatically produce ASNs – something we just couldn't do with our old system."

Said Silverstein, "The seamless integration between Varsity solutions and JD Edwards World is invaluable and a big benefit to the users. We run Varsity in 'black box' mode so the users don't even see Varsity screens – this made it easy for staff who knew JD Edwards World to get up to speed on Varsity ASAP." The integration also provides real time order status anytime from any workstation connected to their iSeries.

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