



Varsity Shipping and Friedman ERP Solutions

Give TIDI Products a Seamless Order-to-Shipment Process

Integration and Automation Yield High Internal Efficiencies and a Superior Customer Experience



Company Profile

TIDI Products

Neenah, WI

www.tidiproducts.com

Industry

Medical, Dental, Film,

Food Service Manufacturing

Varsity Products

ShipSoft-Parcel™

ShipSoft-Freight™

ShipTalk™

Shipping Volume

200 parcel and 1050 freight shipments per month

Number of

Shipping Locations

Two

Carriers

UPS, several LTL carriers

ERP

Friedman Frontier

“The automation, accuracy, flexibility, and efficiency that the Varsity solution suite provides us have helped us to fulfill our promise of a flawless customer experience, and that kind of help is an invaluable contribution to our company growth and overall success in the global marketplace.”

—Dan Schultz, Manager, Information Technology, TIDI Products

COMPANY BACKGROUND

TIDI® Products is a leading global manufacturer of single-use medical, dental, film, and food service products. Product applications span the acute, primary, and extended care medical markets as well as the dental, film converting, and food service markets. With a strong focus on helping customers build their brands and distribution, TIDI Products provides value-added support with private label packaging and promotional materials. This collaborative effort presents customers with an opportunity to partner with a market leader that is dedicated to responsiveness and results. The company employs roughly 250 people and processes 200 parcels and 1050 freight shipments per month from their two facilities located in Neenah, WI and Rialto, CA. The company is also supported by a Hong Kong office and has key international shipping destinations.

BUSINESS GOALS

The company's goal is to create a “flawless” customer experience, and more specifically, a 95% on time delivery rate while minimizing carrier and internal costs.

CHALLENGES

The company had been using an iSeries-based shipping package to meet their core need. However, the original vendor from whom they purchased the application was acquired by another company. At that time, the licensing structure on their shipping solution dramatically changed, becoming cost prohibitive for TIDI Products to maintain. TIDI found out about this change just three months before their license would expire. The company was backed into a corner, believing that researching, buying and installing a new shipping solution in such short notice would be impossible. “We were a couple releases behind and wanted to upgrade, but when we realized the cost impact the new licensing structure was going to have on us, I said ‘stop the presses,’” said Dan Schultz, Manager of Information Technology at TIDI Products. “As a last resort, we were going to pay the excessive maintenance fees for our old software, but we decided to take a shot at it and see what other shipping solutions were out there.”

SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

With a cross-functional team including Operations and IT, the staff at TIDI began to define their key shipping solution needs. To accommodate TIDI's multiple distribution centers, they needed one solution residing on their IBM System i server so that any user at any location could utilize the system simultaneously and have real time, up to the minute order and shipment information. They also required a solution that could process parcel, less than truckload, and truckload shipments as well as rate, consolidate orders, and do UPS tracking – again, all from one system. Additionally, since the company shipped to Puerto Rico, Canada, and European destinations

as well as locations throughout Asia, TIDI had a great need for automated international document generation. The software they were looking to replace wasn't current with international document requirements so export documentation was manually generated, which was inefficient and error prone. Lastly, the new solution needed to interface with their Friedman Frontier Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution so that data could pass seamlessly between the two solutions.

SELECTION PROCESS

With requirements in hand, the IT team quickly began their search. After contacting Friedman for a referral, "... one of our guys got on the IBM System i forum and asked what other companies were using – Varsity's name just kept coming up," said Schultz. After accessing information on the Varsity website, "... we started talking to some contacts over at Varsity as well as with some of their customers and realized that the product suite could meet our requirements – and then some." Additionally, Varsity could get the new system installed, customized, tested, and in production before TIDI's old system licensing lapsed in less than 90 days.

Another strong selling point of the software was price. Commented Schultz, "Pricing was very reasonable and within our budget – a lot more reasonable than our existing shipping system and with a lot more functionality. To top it off, we saw that the software had all the data hooks we needed to quickly build an interface into our Frontier ERP system." Continued Schultz, "At that point, we didn't have to look at any other vendors – Varsity gave us everything we needed."

IMPLEMENTATION

Varsity professional services staff worked in partnership with TIDI IT staff on the implementation. "We have a talented IT staff here, so we used our internal resources to build the interface to our ERP, and Varsity was there to back us up anytime we needed help," stated Schultz. "Better yet, the system was in, up, and running, fast. We first started looking at a new shipping system in September, decided on Varsity in October, and flipped the switch on our new Varsity system on December 31 – the timing couldn't have been better."

While TIDI primarily used Varsity solutions out of the box, the company did have special freight needs that required some modifications. Said Schultz, "We process a very high volume of shipments – sometimes hundreds of thousands of pounds per order. Varsity had the flexibility to accommodate the changes that would take care of our exceptional volumes." Additionally, TIDI had special international documentation needs, which were easily addressed by simply changing the interface to pass the specific data needed through the parameter list

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

The benefits Varsity software has provided TIDI have been notable. Varsity's UPS tracking capabilities are much improved over the company's old shipping system, providing more and better detail. "When it came to freight, our old system didn't give us the rating detail we wanted or it required us to have special notes and make manual changes to extract what detail we could. With ShipSoft-Freight, the rating is a lot more flexible and complete so we can drill into the kind of granular information we need to make the best freight shipping decisions. With the ease of setting up freight rates, we don't have to babysit certain shipments to specific customers anymore, which saves us a good deal of time," continued Schultz. Also regarding freight, TIDI's old shipping system did not provide immediate insight into shipping rule validations. Stated Schultz, "With ShipSoft-Freight, if the user makes an error, we see that error message in real time so we can address it

Results / Benefits

- ◆ Inexpensive to purchase and maintain
- ◆ Quick to implement
- ◆ Flexible system design to accommodate modifications and customizations
- ◆ Improved UPS tracking capabilities
- ◆ Improved freight rating
- ◆ Easier freight rate set up
- ◆ Real time insight into freight rule validations and freight data
- ◆ Automated international document generation
- ◆ Easier and more efficient order consolidation
- ◆ Automated mass label generation

immediately and keep on shipping." Other benefits have included automated, current international document generation and easier and more efficient order consolidation.

Another big time saver included the ability to mass produce labels. Said Schultz, "We often have the need to ship very large quantities of the same product to many shipping destinations. With our old product, we had to hit the enter key to print each and every one of those labels. That was painful and a big waste of precious staff resources." Now, with Varsity solutions, TIDI can mass produce separate UPS labels to separate destinations automatically. "With this capability alone, we can run high quantities of shipping labels in just four hours versus the three days it used to take with our old system." With that newly automated process the TIDI IT team can concentrate their time and resources on more critical aspects of the business.

Concluded Schultz, "The automation, accuracy, flexibility, and efficiency that the Varsity solution suite provides us have helped us to fulfill our promise of a flawless customer experience, and that kind of help is an invaluable contribution to our company growth and overall success in the global marketplace."

About Varsity Logistics, Inc.

Founded in 1989, Varsity Logistics, Inc. is the leading provider of IBM iSeries based shipping systems. Varsity's software supports the full spectrum of parcel, LTL, truckload, and rail shipments, including rate shopping, manifesting, parcel packing, international shipments, and invoice auditing. Deployed in more than 1,100 distribution sites, Varsity helps North American organizations of all sizes improve shipping efficiencies, increase customer satisfaction, and reduce shipping expense. Varsity is based in San Francisco, California. www.varsitylogistics.com.

About Friedman Corporation

Friedman Corporation is a leading provider of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application software specifically designed for the business needs of building and home product manufacturers: cabinets, windows, doors and furniture manufacturers. The company's flagship ERP solution, Frontier®, delivers proven in-depth functionality for the management of operations, financial, manufacturing, and distribution. Friedman's Dealer Solutions Division offers a complete toolset specifically designed to meet the challenges of the dealer, sub-contractor and material supplier. For more information, call Amy Barrington at (847) 572-4402 or visit www.friedmancorp.com.