ACCPAC

CUSTOMER
The Kirk Company

CORPORATE PROFILE

Headquarters
Tacoma, WA

Type of Business
Christmas tree grower

Number of Locations
Three

Number of Employees
75 year-round, 1,000 seasonal

Size
$20 million

SYSTEM PROFILE

Computer System
Microsoft® Windows® 2003 Server, XP Pro

Users on ACCPAC: 50+

ACCPAC Modules in Operation
- ACCPAC Advantage Series™
- ACCPAC CRM
- EDI

Happier Holidays at Kirk Company with ACCPAC

The Kirk Company, founded in the early 1900s, has grown to be the world's largest producer of Christmas trees, but it wasn't exactly saying "ho, ho, ho" about its business system.

The IBM® AS/400® system Kirk had used for 25 years was thoroughly customized to the company's needs. But it produced only paper reports, which had to be generated by a programmer. "Our data was always a day old, and it wasn't in a format we could e-mail to customers," explains Ralph Nilssen, vice president. "So we figured now was the time to step into the 21st century."

Faster Order Entry

The Kirk Company chose ACCPAC Advantage Series™ for its ease of use and instantaneous access to information. The software now serves as the foundation for a completely integrated set of business management applications, including CRM and EDI capabilities.

ACCPAC® is used to manage all general ledger, payables, receivables, inventory, and sales order data. "Our salespeople enter their own orders into ACCPAC CRM™

at the end of each day, for much faster processing," Nilssen says. "This is more efficient than our old system, where orders were handwritten, faxed, and keypunched here at headquarters. The system is easily cutting 20 percent off the time it took to input orders in the past."

National Chains Take Notice

ACCPAC has transformed Kirk's access to information. "As soon as a shipment is loaded at one of our facilities, the information goes into ACCPAC," says Nilssen. "When customers call, we can give them instant, up-to-the-minute

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	RESULTS
Customized AS/400 system required full-time programmer's assistance to create financial reports, precluded giving real-time information to customers.	ACCPAC Advantage Series as an end-to-end solution, including ACCPAC integrated EDI solution and ACCPAC CRM for customer communications.	Implementation of ACCPAC has trimmed 20% of the time previously spent on order entry, and is creating a tremendous competitive edge.

detailed information about their order. This has not been the case previously."

Many Kirk customers are large national home improvement, grocery, and retail chains that place bulk orders for delivery right around Thanksgiving. A day or two-day delay can mean enormous losses, both for the stores and for Kirk—so customers appreciate having up-to-date information at their fingertips.

EDI Is Essential

Many large retailers insist that their vendors have electronic data interchange (EDI) capabilities. Kirk uses ACCPAC integrated EDI solution software to automatically enter orders, provide customers with tracking information, and post analysis on individual customer profits.

Kirk receives great value from its ACCPAC integrated EDI solution investment. "The software is truly cost effective. We retain happy customers, and it also allows us to grow our company and strengthen relationships with the major players in the industry."

Competitive Advantage

"Thanks to ACCPAC, we can do a daily recap of the number of trees on the road or delivered to stores," says Nilssen. "We run special reports for customers telling what and when they paid, their sell-through, and percentage of profit. This relieves buyers of hours of work, so they're naturally happy to order from us again. Most of our competitors cannot offer similar analyses, so this is a real feather in our cap, giving us a genuine competitive edge."

Nilssen says that a buyer at a national grocery chain recently gave him the ultimate compliment. "Because of the quality of your reports and products you deliver, you guys can come in and write your own order," said the buyer. "You've lightened our load so much that we'd never go with another tree vendor."

Implementation of ACCPAC occurred during Kirk's busiest season, and involved switching both hardware and software platforms, often a problematic endeavor. "Our reseller was fantastic," says Nilssen. "They were here with me late into the night for several weeks, making sure that the switchover went smoothly. They deserve a lot of credit for the success of our system."

Nilssen is certain that ACCPAC was the right choice. "ACCPAC has transformed our image from farmers to sophisticated businesspeople. And it helps us secure continued sales far in the future, because we can offer customers things we never thought possible before."