

EXCEEDING TODAY'S SHOWROOM CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS WITH INFORM ERP



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CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

Company Facts:

- Location: New Haven, CT
- Industries: PHCP & HVAC
- Previous Provider: PDS
- Website: benderplumbing.com
- Buying Groups: ALA, ASA, BLUE HAWK, DPHA, Forte, IMARK Plumbing

Features Highlighted:

- Embedded CRM
- Multi-Location Inventory
- Centralized Data
- Warehouse Management

Benefits Gained:

- Top-notch customer service
- Error-free warehouse operations
- Sales team accountability
- Unified operations

Since their humble beginnings in 1921, BENDER Supply has evolved into the largest retail and wholesale provider of home design products in Connecticut. With 8 locations and 6 showrooms, BENDER continues to do what it takes to provide service that sets them apart and deliver on promises more accurately than ever before. Behind the scenes, the leading distributor utilizes DDI System's Inform ERP Software to manage operations seamlessly and stand out as a distributor of choice.

Using Technology to Serve Customers

BENDER began as a traditional plumbing wholesaler, and still caters to local tradesmen with a wide range of PHCP, PVF & HVAC materials. As customer needs evolved, BENDER seized an opportunity to also add attainable luxury products such as kitchen and bath cabinetry, lighting, tile and stone to its product offering. To stay in sync with both their trade and retail customers, BENDER relied on Inform ERP. The system manages everything from proper inventory control to billing, sales performance, and stock — all of which are critical for a business like BENDER to operate successfully and continue on a growth trajectory.

"With the right technology on board, BENDER's team is able to provide customers with valuable information like stock levels, lead times for orders, order tracking, status updates, and ultimately, when a customer's project will be completed," says Director of Operations Mark Chirgwin.

CRM Identifies Missed Opportunities

BENDER utilizes Inform's embedded CRM functionality to continue to provide the all important customer focus. The system is able to differentiate between trade and retail customers by using their unique information in preferences and projects to connect. In addition, it helps to notify users

to follow up with customers with open quotes and proposals. The calendaring and task follow-up feature has helped BENDER make significant progress.

"We had a customer that our team wanted to stop quoting to because they never ordered and instead went with our competitors," Chirgwin said. "When we got everyone using Inform's native CRM, we realized no one had been following up with the customer after they'd been provided the quotes. We used the task management feature of the CRM screen, began following up with the customer and were able to win their business."

Stephanie, the New Haven showroom Manager, says Inform helps her pull reports and manage sales teams more effectively. "We use the pipeline report and that is so great for the team because it gives us a way to follow up and put notes in. It truly helps us form better connections with our customers."

Crushing Goals by Aligning Teams

Inform also helps BENDER to align the all-important human element—their employees—with their business operations and customers. "Our biggest assets are our people and the training and understanding they have of our customers and their needs," Chirgwin emphasized. "DDI's software unifies all of that. The system makes it easier for us to elevate our training and education process for our teammates."

"We're advancing the expectations and culture here at BENDER to ensure everybody is accountable for their roles. One way to do that is through the metrics and reporting we pull from the system. It's not just saying, 'Wow, that person works really hard'. We can set KPIs and define what working hard is by seeking things like how many items have they picked in an hour," explains Chirgwin. Ultimately, that type of goal setting will enable teams to be more knowledgeable than ever before.

"Inform helps to re-allocate human resources and move team members around the business. We can track goals and accomplishments as well as capabilities, ultimately allowing us to position team members in roles the business requires."

The New Mindset of Showroom Customers

As showroom customers become more educated than ever before, they are getting more involved in the research and decision-making process. Typically a job once reserved for contractors, customers—now influenced by popular home renovation shows and online catalog ideas—are showing up in the supply house seeking very specific items



BENDER uses DDI System's Inform ERP Software to manage everything from inside sales to warehouse operations.

to complete their projects. To keep them coming back, BENDER prides themselves on delivering the highest level of expertise and impeccable customer service.

"I am a huge driver on customer service. If we don't give customers the best service, customers can and will easily go elsewhere," says Stephanie. "Bottom line is, customers can come to this beautiful showroom, see what they're looking for here and ultimately, go buy it somewhere else. What stops that from happening is ensuring we provide service that truly sets us apart."

Partners in Success

After 15 years of partnership, the future looks bright for BENDER and DDI. "They've kept us on the cutting edge of technology," says ERP System Manager Jason Sepe. "DDI has provided us with strong technology for our business, and they offer the support we need as we continue to grow our business. DDI's support is second to none."

"DDI is always working to raise the bar, make it better, listen to their customer base, try to experience it from the supply houses' lens, so I think that's really awesome," says Chirgwin. "If you want to grow, and if you want to compete with the changing customer mindset, you must be prepared to embrace change," Chirgwin advises. Mark explained that having a partner like DDI System helps to move the needle at whatever pace you need. "I think a lot of the supply house owners from the 60's and 70's are still making it work. But how they view the value of their ERP partner could be the difference between being in business 10 years from now and closing the doors. By choosing a partner like DDI you're saying I want my business to not just survive, but to win in every category."

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DDI System's Inform ERP distribution management software is a leading, industry-specific solution for wholesale suppliers. Inform ERP optimizes distribution operations, creates lean inventories, strengthens financials and propels sales to continually exceed performance goals—all while delivering an exceptional client experience unmatched by any other software provider.

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