



Propper Manufacturing Adds eWorkplace's Quality Management and Validation Services

Improves traceability and quality control while ensuring FDA compliance when upgrading ERP software

Overview

For years, Propper Manufacturing ran its business on an aging AS400 system with several siloed applications. The legacy system stymied the company's growth, and the manual processes for quality control were time consuming and inefficient. Propper deployed Acumatica ERP with eWorkplace Apps' Quality Management Suite and its Validation Service, which streamlined operations, and improved traceability while eliminating manual processes. Propper Manufacturing also gained peace of mind that its software would remain FDA compliant through ERP upgrades.



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Rufino Achacoso

Vice President of Quality Operations
Propper Manufacturing Co., Inc.



Products

eWorkplace Apps Quality Management Suite and Validation Services, with Acumatica Manufacturing Edition

MANUFACTURING	Medical sterilization products and services
HEADQUARTERS	Long Island City, NY
EMPLOYEES	40

Key Results

- Implemented end-to-end, flexible ERP platform seamlessly connected to QMS system
- Improved communication, eliminating delays and saving time
- Automated manual, paper-based workflows, increasing productivity and accountability while saving time
- Gained eWorkplace App's Quality Management Suite that quarantines and tests items throughout receiving, production, and shipping process to ensure tighter control of production; includes Certificates of Analysis
- Increased records accuracy and access with single, end-to-end platform
- Avoided potential regulatory shutdowns by having required software validation services
- Eliminated paper files, reducing paper retention and costs while speeding access to data
- Gained peace of mind with GMP Validation service that software upgrades will carry required validation

Challenges

Propper Manufacturing Company, Inc. is a leading manufacturer of disposable medical devices, sterilization monitoring devices, and services.

The 78-year-old company sells its sterilization products to healthcare, dental, veterinary, biotech, and pharmaceutical companies, in addition to other industries. The family-owned company's mission is to provide high-quality infection control products that help eliminate hospital-acquired infections.

For years, Propper Manufacturing operated on a legacy AS400 system that handled inventory but not purchasing, which ran on a disconnected Microsoft Access database. The company operated with other manual databases and spreadsheets as well. Quality management operations were tracked in an Access database. The disconnected systems led to multiple entries and inconsistent information, says Rufino Achacoso, Vice President of Quality Operations.

“There were some connections but it seemed like everyone had different systems,” he says. “One of the larger Quality Management issues is that we weren’t connected to the inventory module in AS400. The Quality team had to do paperwork in one database, and then moved inventory in another database. The systems were built internally for Quality and lacked modern requirements, such as non-conformance reporting. We also had to print physical files.”

Navigating the ancient-looking AS400 system wasn’t easy, Achacoso says. “Using the AS400, you had to use command prompts, and it was easy to forget where something was and the different prompts and rules you needed to try to get to it.”

Trying to decipher paper documents and handwriting was frustrating and time consuming, adds Gloria Narsayha, Director, Regulatory Affairs & Quality, who often had to decipher whether someone had written a 9 or 7 in a string of 8-digit product numbers. Paper files often had missing dates and user names. Communication between teams was sometimes verbal and not recorded on paper.

“Having multiple systems not connected caused a lot of communication problems and delays,” she says. “If someone forgot to send an email or put something in the system, it didn’t trigger the next person to complete their step. Often, we physically had to find someone to learn where a Quality task was in the process.”

Tracking down Quality Control testing information for a certain product required sifting through a file cabinet or waiting a day or so for the Quality Test team – busy with other priorities - to provide the information, Narsayah says.

Solution

Acumatica with eWorkplace Apps Quality Control Management

The company’s upper management made the decision to invest in Acumatica Cloud ERP to get a more efficient and modern system, one that provided more uniformity and improved reporting to the entire organization, says Narsayah. Throughout discussions with its Acumatica implementation partner, Propper executives learned about Acumatica’s partnership with eWorkplace Apps and its Quality Management Suite and its Validation Services.

Acumatica’s agile, modern, and flexible xRP platform allows third-party companies to create custom processes, procedures, and applications to meet a customer’s unique business requirements.



Recognizing an opportunity to better serve customers, Acumatica and eWorkplace Apps created a relationship in which eWorkplace Apps extended Acumatica's features to support the manufacturing and quality needs of process manufacturers using its industry knowledge and intellectual property gathered over 30 years in a related entity called BatchMaster.

Propper Manufacturing deployed the Quality Management Suite (QMS) for Acumatica by eWorkplace Apps. The QMS is natively built within and is an integral part of Acumatica's platform and its Manufacturing and Distribution Editions.

eWorkplace Apps' QMS

Using the Acumatica toolset and database, the QMS tightly integrates to critical, companywide business processes and Acumatica ERP's financial management, order management, purchasing, production, inventory, warehouse management, shipping, and other core applications.

The eWorkplace App's solution provides end-to-end Quality Control testing on receiving raw materials, production (in-process and at completion), shipping, kitting, ad-hoc and RMA QC. It allows customers to execute inspection plans, checklists, and QC tests against products, people, and equipment.

The solution also generates and provides certificate of analysis (COA) and production deviation documents and reports and tracks non-conformances. The Quality Management Suite also manages corrective and preventative action processes while maintaining a complete audit trail.

Propper also adopted eWorkplace Apps' eValidation Services, which it offered through its sister company, GMP Validation. This ensures that when Acumatica is updated, the company remains in compliance with FDA processes and rules regarding software.

"We needed a system that could be validated to comply with Federal Drug Administration requirements," says Narsayah. "Being a medical device maker, validation was a big checkmark for us."

Benefits

Seamless Integration from Order to Quality Control through Ship

The two eWorkplace Apps' solutions built within Acumatica's core framework and therefore use the same friendly user interface. Data flows throughout the entire system through automated tasks and into customized dashboards, which streamlined operations and saved countless hours.

Executives and employees can see transactions from end-to-end throughout multiple operational departments, something they couldn't do with its legacy AS400 system. Now, everyone can view a transaction from when an order is placed to when the company receives payment for it.

With Acumatica's unlimited user pricing, employees no longer have to share access or wait for others to accomplish tasks and executives don't have to worry about rising per-user licensing costs when employment grows.

Propper Manufacturing has streamlined its operations, and with automated workflows, has increased productivity throughout the company. It has improved communication across teams, and employees have instant access to accurate records. They no longer chase employees looking for information and instead can easily search and find data themselves since everyone has access to the platform.

"We've done a lot of streamlining and have cut down on processes and our paper reduction," says Narsayah. "We also print less, which provides an environmental and storage impact."

Improved Quality Control and Testing

The relatively young Quality Control team appreciated the knowledge and depth of expertise that the eWorkplace Apps team shared and the guidance they provided especially when knowledge gaps were apparent.

"They really understood FDA requirements and explained what the system could do, which was great," Narsayah says. "We are still scratching the surface but the system has already had a huge impact. Just being able to search and pull things up quickly made us much more efficient and data more retrievable."

For example, "Previously, obtaining past records for review would mean visits to the physical archives in our facility's basement and looking for specific filing boxes, which at times felt like looking for a needle in a haystack," says Achacoso. "Now, with electronic records and intuitive search and filter functionality, retrieving records is done much more efficiently."

Quality Control releases are also speedier, thanks to automated processes. Before, information had to be updated in two separate systems. "Now, the QC order combines the documentation of the item(s) being released with the inventory transfer," Achacoso says. Release stickers are generated automatically based on the information in the QC order. Before, the release stickers were handwritten, which could be a very time-consuming process when multiple release stickers were needed based on the packaging configuration, he says.

Searching for Quality Control release history was paper-based, so there was no way to filter information electronically. Now, the team can quickly search on the "Quality Controls Order" page by SKU, product description or QC order, which saves time.

Generating product certificates and looking up information such as an expiration data that corresponded to a lot number previously meant spending a lot of time looking for the correct information. That information then was typed into various fields on a template, which took time to enter correctly.

With the current process in Acumatica, one click generates the certificate with all the required product lot information. It's then saved as a PDF and uploaded to the Propper website.

“Custom inquiries/reports can be made in Acumatica for specific situations, which has made data retrieval and traceability so much easier,” Achacoso says. “We now have a customized report that allows us to quickly trace which countries a specific product was sold to within a user defined data range, something that could take days of manual review and data collection to obtain in our old system.”

Conclusion

With automated workflows and a platform that seamlessly connects finance, quality control and testing with inventory and through shipping and payment processing, Propper Manufacturing is much more efficient, which allows it to better serve customers.

Executives don’t have to worry about potential government sanctions because they know their software systems are properly validated. They now have peace of mind that they have a connected quality management application that can handle their quality testing, certificates of analysis, traceability and recall notices that they need to succeed.

“Automating the quality control process was a drastic change for us and now everything truly is in one system,” says Achacoso. “I can’t say enough about the eWorkplace team; it’s huge to work with such a nice, knowledgeable team that educated and guided us without making us feel inadequate. They really elevated us.”

Adds Narsayah, “I would strongly recommend eWorkplace Apps. They are very personable, helpful, and responsive.”

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