



Case Study: **PACIFIC PLUMBING SUPPLY**

ULTRA
CONSULTANTS

About Pacific Plumbing Supply

Pacific Plumbing Supply Co. LLC is a Seattle, Wash.-based wholesale distributor for plumbing and heating products.

Established in 1949, and still family-owned, the company operates 14 locations in Washington and Alaska, and has more than 200 employees. Its core products include traditional plumbing, radiant heating and decorative plumbing products, as well as luxury and “green” plumbing products.

Pacific Plumbing Supply Enables Future Success with Broad Change Now

Like many mid-sized distributors, Pacific Plumbing Supply Company chafed against the limitations of its legacy management platform and scraped by with a number of time-consuming manual workaround processes. Owners and managers knew it was well past time to implement a modern ERP solution and gain the advantages it would offer.

“We moved to a new platform because we had to,” said Jon Stafford, CFO of the Seattle-based company. “The old platform wasn’t going to be able to take us into the future. And it couldn’t do things we wanted to do, like sophisticated warehouse management, mobile and e-commerce.”

PROJECT DRIVERS



Limitations of legacy platform



Need to optimize core processes



Time-consuming manual workarounds



Enable growth and acquisitions



Inability to update legacy software



Lack of internal ERP expertise

Greater Efficiency Requires Change

Pacific Plumbing Supply is a 72-year-old, family-owned and operated company, with 14 branch locations and 200 employees. “We weren’t looking to spend the kind of money it would take to implement a modern ERP solution,” Stafford continued, “but we understood that the ROI is in new capabilities and new tools we can use to operate more efficiently.”

Pacific Plumbing’s managers knew, too, that the ERP implementation was going to be difficult for their organization, with the redefinition and remaking of established processes and a great deal of change at every level.

ERP Partner with Distribution Expertise

Pacific Plumbing engaged Ultra Consultants to lead the business process

improvement project, to facilitate the ERP software evaluation and selection, and to manage the implementation.

“We selected Ultra because we wanted a partner that was not tied to a particular software company,” Stafford explained. “And, most important, we wanted a company that works in the mid-market distribution space, one that sees our world the way we do, one that had done hundreds of implementations like ours for hundreds of companies like ours.” Beyond that important experience, Stafford indicated that the value Ultra provided included access to experienced professionals, proven methodologies and the specialized resources to ensure every phase of the project was successful.

“We did not have the in-house expertise, experience and knowledge we needed. Or the time to do it ourselves,” Stafford stated. “So we went start-to-finish with Ultra to take us from our then-current state to our future state. Ultra’s helped us determine what to do and how to do it.” Ultra first focused its efforts on business process improvement and best practices. It was clear to the project team that Pacific Plumbing’s desired future state was highly dependent on optimizing and transforming the company’s core processes.

Pacific Plumbing leadership was right to expect that process improvement

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was going to be a challenge. There was significant resistance to Ultra's recommendations to modify and discard "time-proven" processes.

In fact, with any complex project, resistance to change is the norm. Ultra expects it, prepares for it, and works to minimize its impact.

Approach Includes Change Management

Ultra's structured, purposeful approach is designed to help smooth the transitions for people, teams and the entire organization. Often, as it was for Pacific Plumbing, the key is communicating the project's scope, rollout strategy and implementation schedule, and, most importantly, clearly articulating the case for change. By ensuring that every level of the company understood the benefits that would come with the future state, resistance was reduced - and continues to be addressed.

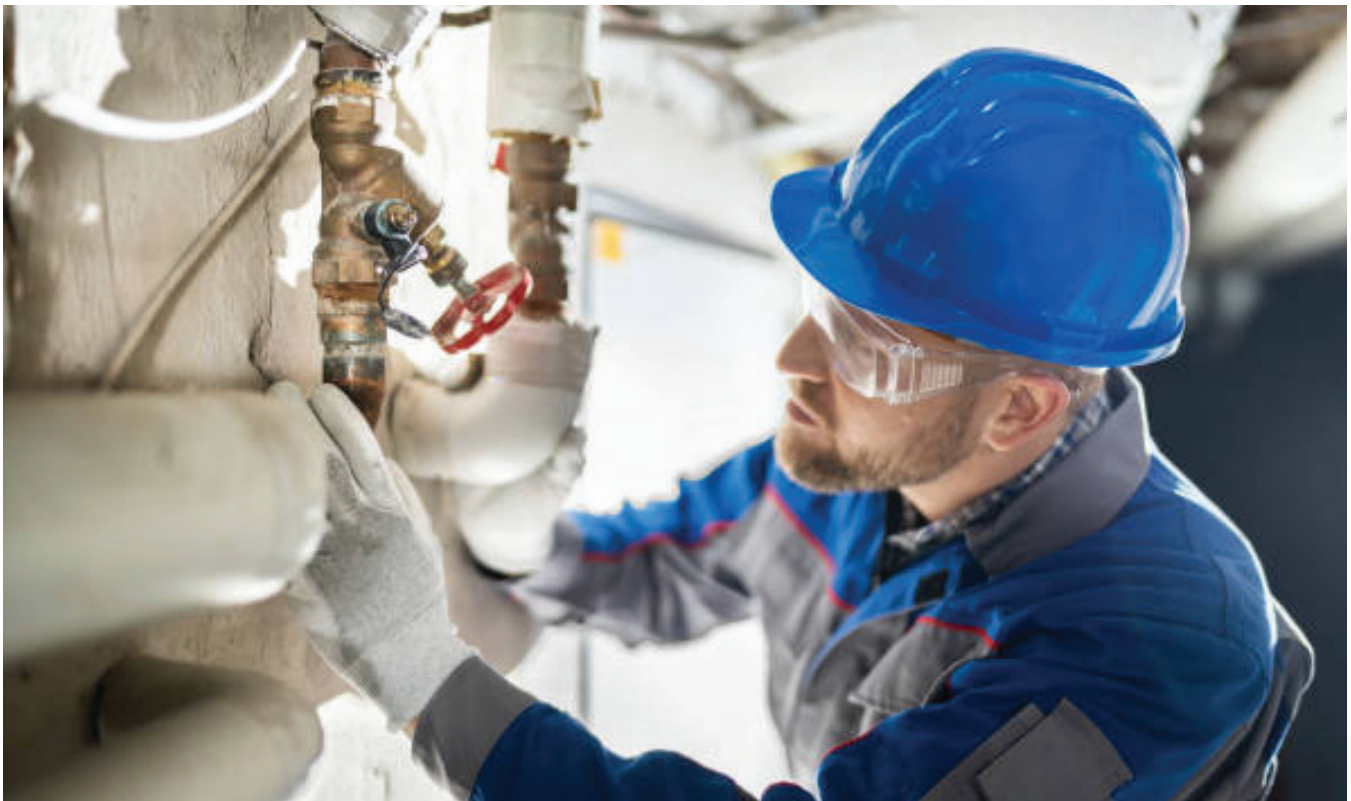
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“Ultra understands the human element in ERP – that successful implementations are more about the people and processes than the software,” Stafford said. “The difficulty is in change management, and Ultra does that every day.”

For Ultra, change management is not a phase of the project. Instead, change





management is woven into the fabric of the methodology, built into the project plan and infused in team culture for every engagement.

Independent Insight and Guidance

Software selection, too, leveraged Ultra's industry and project expertise – and its knowledge of ERP software strengths and weaknesses. After an in-depth evaluation of the options, Pacific Plumbing chose Epicor Prophet 21, an end-to-end, ERP solution created specifically for distribution.

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Ultra's independent insight and neutral approach allowed Pacific Plumbing to evaluate a variety of ERP vendors, identify the best-fit solutions, choose the platform that was best for its needs, operations and budget, and then negotiate cost.

Access to Specialized Expertise

Ultra's expertise in project management – the final phase of the project – was valuable to Pacific Plumbing. “We couldn't have done the implementation ourselves,” Stafford said. “We understood that the project was too complex and resource-intensive to go alone. Ultra already knew our organization, our people and our processes, so we engaged them to handle implementation.”

And that was key, Stafford continued: “It was important for us to team up with experts who created an overall plan and were able to identify potential risks – and mitigate those risks before they could become obstacles that could disrupt the flow of the project.”

Every implementation has points at which specialized expertise is required, and Ultra brought in resources from inside and outside its organization to resolve complex issues in several areas, including data migration and procurement module setup. “We wouldn’t have been able to access people with that level of knowledge and experience,” Stafford said. “So access to that high-level support in specific areas was critical to the success of our implementation.”

On-Time, On-Budget and Ready

Pacific Plumbing is glad to be past the implementation phase, Stafford said, and “delighted” to have been able to stay within the time and cost limits it set.

ERP implementation can be risky, Stafford points out. “In our industry, the road is littered with the carcasses of expensive, failed implementations, and businesses irreparably damaged by unsuccessful upgrades. With Ultra on

our team, we were able to get past the bumps and avoid the potholes, and not be one of those companies.”

“Most importantly, we are extremely happy to be on a current-technology, supportable platform that will allow us to meet our future integration and expansion needs,” Stafford continued. “And today we are a better, smarter company because the rigor of the process forced us to ‘up our game’ in many areas.”

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WHY ULTRA?


When you need to bring in outside resources, it’s critically important to choose an ERP consulting partner with a formal, proven ERP project methodology. In addition, you will want to work with a firm that is flexible and able to adapt its methodology to meet your company’s unique needs.

For more than 27 years, Ultra Consultants has utilized its proven methodology, ERP expertise and industry knowledge to deliver measurable business performance improvements to manufacturers and distributors in virtually every vertical.

- Our services are built for your industry. **We understand your processes and requirements.**
- Our solutions leverage our expertise. **We help you choose software to meet your unique needs.**
- Our results reflect our ERP experience. **We maximize benefits and minimize risk – and deliver success.**

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