

## SUCCESS STORY

**CDS**

**Customized Distribution Services, Inc.**

### PROFILE

Customized Distribution Services, Inc. provides specialized warehousing, distribution, and logistics to the food and beverage industry. The company employs between 500 and 1,000 employees at six facilities located across the United States. However, CDS's ability to customize its warehouse and distribution services for its national client base separates this company from generic warehouse distributors. In fact, CDS has built its business and reputation for excellent service by meeting the unique needs of its customers.

### INDUSTRY

Transportation and Logistics

### QUICKBASE APPLICATION

Project management, task management, computer hardware asset management, group scheduling, document library

### WHO'S USING QUICKBASE

Ninety percent of CDS managers use the system daily to collaborate on projects and share best-practice information.

### Intuit QuickBase

100 5th Avenue, 7th Floor  
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### The Challenge:

- Difficulty collaborating on projects across six distribution centers
- No centralized computer hardware asset tracking
- Need to improve communications and scheduling between employees
- Improve response time to routine information requests
- Capitalize on industry knowledge gained company-wide
- Provide secure access to shared information

### The Solution:

- Web-hosted project management facilitates cross-site collaboration
- Centralized task management keeps projects on schedule
- Centralized scheduling tracks employee time in the office
- Online document library gives employees 24/7 access to information
- User-level access control secures data from unauthorized viewing and use

### The Results:

- All managers have real-time access to data for improved collaboration
- Task management is streamlined and missed deadlines are reduced
- Routine paperwork is disseminated online freeing up staff time
- Best practices can be shared company wide for improved project outcomes
- Communication is improved with online access to staff schedules
- The number of e-mails, phone calls and conference calls is reduced

## Centralizing a Decentralized Distribution Business with QuickBase

CDS built a thriving business by delivering high-quality, highly customized distribution services to its national client base of food and beverage companies. But with a booming business came a bigger challenge for CDS: its six distribution centers were highly decentralized, making project management difficult and time intensive.

"We had six distribution centers located across the country, each one with its own client base and own project tasks, and there was limited interaction between them," said Dave Turo, vice president of information technology at CDS. Making matters more complex, each distribution center had its own IT person, who had to funnel information back to Turo in the corporate facility, slowing IT staff productivity.

Conference calls and email could go only so far to help bridge the communications gap between the distribution centers and the CDS corporate facility. There was no computer hardware asset tracking system tying installed hardware to support contracts. Project information was not centralized; some information was stored at the corporate headquarters, while the rest was housed locally on servers at the different facilities. And without central scheduling software, there was no insight into employee availability.

Perhaps most important, CDS was missing a critical opportunity to capitalize on the industry knowledge it had gained over the years.

"I saw a valuable opportunity for the different facilities to help each other with various projects and take advantage of our entire 'brain trust' of industry expertise, which could improve our service offerings and reduce our response time to customers," commented Turo.

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## THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE

*“For the first time, people from different sites are actually coordinating on projects and working collaboratively with people from different groups. It’s been tremendous for business.”*

## QuickBase Wins Over Off-the-Shelf Apps and Delivers On-the-Money Functionality

The need for a centralized project management application was clear. But it was functionality, application flexibility and enterprise security that led CDS to choose QuickBase over off-the-shelf tools.

CDS customized some ready-made QuickBase applications to create ten different applications, including project management, task management, computer hardware asset tracking, calendaring, and a document library.

“Whatever application I needed, QuickBase had a template to create it quickly. But if I wanted to start from scratch and create my own, it gave me the flexibility of doing that too,” said Turo.

CDS tested a small task management and calendar application with its IT staff. After just six months, Turo was able to launch a full project management application and documentation library company-wide with complete confidence that it would be well received.

“QuickBase made it easy for me to see how IT employees would react initially, and then roll out the full-blown applications to management employees when we were ready,” commented Turo.

Project data that had been stored locally on desktops and servers is now stored in these web-hosted applications for easy centralized access by authorized users from all distribution centers. IT, finance, customer service, operations and HR have a secure, central repository for information sharing that works across the different sites, improving overall work flow and collaboration.

Now, forms are standardized and documentation is centralized, so information at one distribution center benefits the entire company. Process documents that contain best-practice information and procedures are seamlessly shared between the distribution centers. Computer hardware asset information is managed online and automatic notifications are generated when a support contract is about to expire. HR forms are downloaded by employees directly. And an FAQ guide eliminates many of the phone calls and emails formerly needed to answer routine questions.

None of it could have been possible without the enterprise security offered by QuickBase. With secure access by department, by role and by project, QuickBase gives facility managers the security they need to feel comfortable sharing confidential data online. As a result, 90 percent of managers transitioned to the system and use it daily to share information and collaborate.

## Big ROI, Real Business Benefits

CDS saw a return on its QuickBase investment right away. Project management was greatly improved. The number of emails, phone calls and conference calls was immediately reduced, freeing up staff time for more critical, bottom-line initiatives.

Projects and tasks no longer fall through the cracks. The project management application gives managers views that show up-to-the-minute progress and status. Email alerts are automatically triggered when jobs fall off schedule so corrective action can be taken to get back on track quickly.

“The fact that QuickBase alerts us when a job schedule is slipping is huge. It makes us better project managers and it’s all due to the way the tool is constructed,” said Turo.

The documentation library gives CDS the competitive advantage it was looking for: employees from all facilities can access and share information on demand. Field personnel can search and retrieve data from remote locations and use the information for better job outcomes.

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With centralized calendaring, individual groups clearly see travel schedules, vacations and sales meetings, making better use of staff availability and reducing time lost when important information is sent to staffers who are out of town or otherwise unavailable.

According to Turo, “We needed to put structure and order into the way our business was run, and QuickBase gave us that and more. It’s one of the most flexible tools I’ve used, and there’s no limit to what we can do with it.”

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