

Bright Spot in a Worldwide Weak Economy

by:

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Real time supply chain integration improves efficiency by eliminating duplication of efforts, reducing paperwork and improving communication between fastener suppliers and clients.



The fastener industry is facing a difficult time. Sales are down, profits are being squeezed. To add insult to injury, the downturn in the economy is actually creating more work for the typical fastener distributor. Since no one is sure what is going to happen next in the economy, customers are placing smaller orders more frequently.

Customers are also requesting many more quotes from many more fastener vendors and of course only one company gets the order. All of these factors create more work for fastener distributors that they must do in less time, typically with fewer people.

Modest Improvement Forecast

It's not all terrible news though. **Freedonia Group, Inc.** predicts that USA fastener demand will reach US\$12.5 billion in 2013. Freedonia says that demand for industrial fasteners will advance 1.2% per year. Worldwide growth is predicted at over 4%. These are modest increases, but at least they are not predicting a further decline.

Profit margins are eroding in the face of intense competition. In order for a fastener distributor to survive, they must maintain tight control over their inventory. Additionally, they must reduce the cost of each transaction in order to maintain profitability.

Fastener Industry Slow to Apply Technology

The fastener industry has been slow to adopt new technology. Computer systems have been regarded as a necessary evil and often relegated to the job of billing machine.

In today's market climate however, the only alternative for fastener distributors is to increase the amount of automation in their business. These distributors need to carefully manage their inventory and improve their supply chain management. Inventory management is a key element to running a successful distributorship. Seamless communication with vendors and customers is critically important for a distributor to succeed.

Change is Needed

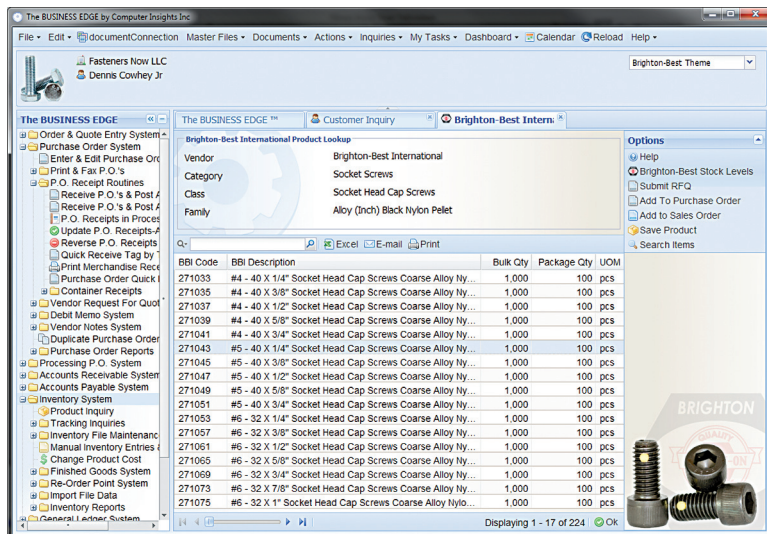
Companies that want to be successful in the future can take good advantage of the current market conditions to implement new systems that will make them more competitive in the future. A system change to a modern fully integrated software package can have a very positive impact on the bottom line in the years to come.

A common problem for fastener distributors is trying to justify the cost of a new system. This is particularly difficult when they feel uncertain about their future business with their customers. Despite the uncertainty, the time to act is now.

New System Is A Team Effort

A good example of a team effort at improving efficiency in the in the supply chain is a new system called the "Brighton-Best Connection". This new system is a joint effort between the **Brighton-Best International (BBI)** and **Computer Insights (CI)**. Brighton-Best is a leading supplier of fasteners and the company is also a technological leader in the industry. Brighton-Best is changing the way business is done in the fastener industry. The company sells exclusively to distributors and has pioneered large-scale electronic ordering in the industry. The company has created a website for browsing its inventory, requesting quotes and placing orders.

Over the past 17 years Computer Insights has been focused entirely on the fastener industry. CI's system, The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 is very



The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 inventory list screen

popular in the industry and has been installed at hundreds of clients. This fully integrated system handles all of the processes in a typical fastener distributor. CI's mission is to streamline operations and squeeze costs out of the daily operations of fastener distributors.

Seamless Integration

The Brighton-Best Connection enables CI clients to have access to the BBI server from inside The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0. Users can browse the BBI server, find the products, request quotes and place orders without ever leaving The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0. This means that users of The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 get all the benefits of the BBI online presence without ever having to do double entry. Also, since the entry is presented in an automated form, CI customers continue to receive the popular BBI 5% web discount.

The impact of this system is significant. It completely eliminates the need for double entry of data. It improves accuracy and speed and it improves the level of communication between BBI and their customers.

Is This System Right for You?

Do you purchase products from Brighton-Best? Would you like to have real time price and product availability from Brighton-Best inside your internal system? Would you like to keep the 5% web discount, but use your own system?

With the Brighton-Best Connection, BBI becomes the most convenient and best value vendor that you could choose. Brighton-Best Connection features include the following:

- Check real-time inventory availability and pricing right from the BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 inquiry screens.
- Enter Quote requests directly onto the BBI website from inside The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0
- Enter Purchase Orders into The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 with up to the minute pricing.
- Place Purchase Orders on Brighton-Best's server with the touch of a button inside The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0.
- Brighton-Best Part Numbers are added to your existing Inventory numbers as part of the installation process.
- Easily add Brighton-Best Product Numbers to new products entered into The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 (Brighton-Best's complete Inventory included).
- Brighton-Best PO confirmations automatically posted to The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0.
- Upon Shipment, Brighton-Best Invoices are posted to the BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 automatically and without error.



Computer Insights CEO (and author of this article), Dennis R. Cowhey (left) and Brighton-Best International CEO, Robert Shieh (right).

- The entire process is streamlined.
- Many individual steps are fully automated.
- You make more money in less time with less effort and with no errors.

This new system eliminates duplication of effort, reduces paperwork and improves communication between our fastener clients and BBI. It's an idea whose time has come. It is the beginning of a huge improvement in supply chain integration in the fastener industry.

Robert Shieh, CEO of Brighton-Best International, commented, "We are very excited about the partnership between Computer Insights and Brighton-Best International because we share the common goal of better servicing the customer. When you create a business model that focuses on providing increasing value to the customer, you create a lasting, sustainable company."

Find details at www.ci-inc.com/software/bbi/ or visit www.ci-inc.com / www.brightonbest.com

FTI

Warehouse	Bulk Available	Package Available	Repack Available	Allow Repack
Atlanta	17,060	3,900	20,960	Yes
New Jersey	7,500	90	7,590	Yes
Chicago	5,000	1,800	6,800	Yes
Boston	0	2,600	2,600	Yes
Cincinnati	0	1,700	1,700	Yes
Houston	2,500	2,300	4,800	Yes
Miami	5,000	1,100	6,100	Yes

The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 individual record screen.