

Customer Portal Solution Improves On-Hand Visibility, Service and Satisfaction



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Allure Bridals

Business Drivers

- Customer Portal Compatible
- Business Process Improvements
- Custom Credit Card

Allure Bridals is a leading designer and global distributor of award-winning bridal, bridesmaid and prom gowns. Recognized throughout the industry for their fashion-forward design and silhouettes, Allure Bridals has earned a patent for its unique corset

construction and industry praise for its sophisticated designs. Recognized with two Debi Awards, the company also received the coveted Desert Rose Award in 2005, 2006 and 2007 — the highest honor in the bridal industry.

Allure Bridals began in 1998 as a mother and son partnership. Today, the company has grown into an international success story. Mother Joan Crum, and son, Kelly, now count more than 15 employees engaged in customer service along with additional domestic and international sales representatives. As a designer and international distributor, the company sources its gowns through overseas manufacturing partners in China. A total of eight branded Allure lines delight brides, their attendants and promgoers throughout the Americas, Europe and Australia.

Global Growth Drives Need for Industry Specific Solution

With sales and revenue growth running 25- to 30-percent annually, Allure Bridals decided to replace its Sage MAS accounting-only program with an integrated system designed specifically for apparel distribution. Owner Kelly Crum, and office manager, Janna Looney, led the discovery process. A decision to purchase the Apprise® system in August of 2007 contained one caveat. Implementation would need to be completed by the start of its busy season, which was just a few short months away.

Profile in Brief

- International designer and distributor of award-winning formal wear
- Serves department stores, including Saks, Nordstrom and Neiman Marcus, and small boutique retailers
- Distributed in the Americas, Europe and Australia



Business Impact

- Improved Visibility, Warehouse Efficiency & Customer Satisfaction
- Reduced Shipping Costs
- Eliminated Custom Order Errors
- Gained Detailed Business Intelligence into Sales Trends

Visibility Helps Differentiate Award-Winning Brand

With a go-live date of November 1, 2007, the Apprise Software project management team set out to do some discovery of its own. Early discussions centered on the need for robust Customer Portal capabilities that would allow sales representatives and customers to see on-hand inventory anytime of day or night.

Additional requirements included the ability to consolidate invoices for more efficient shipping processes and reduced costs. And better visibility of sales trends was also needed to gauge future demand.

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Allure Bridals sells to independent bridal retailers and boutiques. Among the company’s goals was to align its new system so retailers could access critical inventory information during evening and weekend business hours. Previously, sales representatives called customer service for inventory and order status information. With Apprise®, both sales representatives and retailers have access to real-time warehouse inventory status, as well as orders currently in production.

“Our lead times are anywhere from three to four months,” said Looney. “The ability to see orders in production gives customers an extra level of comfort that orders will be delivered on time, as promised. It also allows customers to place new orders with confidence based on styles already in production.”

Integration Improves Order Accuracy, Shipping Efficiency and Business Intelligence

With Apprise, custom orders have been streamlined and improved. Previously, customer service representatives used a multi-step process to communicate special instructions, which were then downloaded by the factory into Excel spreadsheets. Because custom instructions weren’t integrated with actual sales orders, details were often missed at the manufacturing level.

Now, Allure Bridals has an integrated process to communicate special order requirements. Special order instructions are input directly into the order entry screen to eliminate communication errors and missed instructions. The new process has a 100 percent effective rate.

Other system improvements include the ability to consolidate invoices onto one pick ticket so multiple customer orders can be bundled and shipped together to save time and money. Third-party integration with Federal Express’ shipping interface, and automatically generated shipping labels, improve processes further.

“Apprise gives us the detailed business intelligence and functionality we need to stay competitive,” said Looney. “With our long lead times it’s critical for us to understand how sales are trending. With Apprise we’re able to produce inventory and production reports to understand our sales at the style, color and size level. Our customers love our Customer Portal site. And we’re very pleased, too.”

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