

Lakeshirts Takes Out the Wrinkles with SYSPRO

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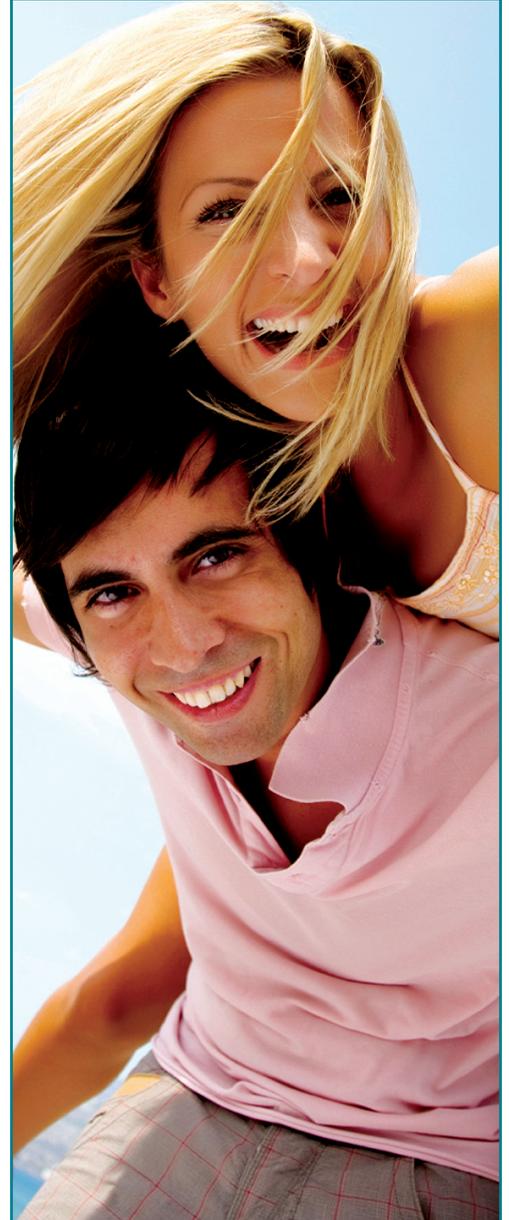
■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Lakeshirts

INDUSTRY

Clothing Manufacturing



■ The Company

Founded 20 years ago by Mark Fritz and Mike Hutchinson in a home basement, Lakeshirts today is a full-service screen print, embroidery and dye works company that manufactures and sells products to resorts, golf and corporate entities. Lakeshirts maintains a library of more than 5000 stock designs that can be customized with the name of the resort or golf club, and applied to a variety of garments, including tee shirts, sweat shirts and golf shirts as well as caps. Lakeshirts, which has produced products for such prestigious events as the New York City Marathon, sells through a network of sales representatives.

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■ The Challenge

Producing shirts for special events requires that the project be completed at exactly the right moment and that the order be 100% correct. There is no room for any variance on deliveries, order precision and quality. The challenge for Lakeshirts was to implement technology to facilitate order entry and maximize production efficiency. A primary goal was to enable Lakeshirts' sales representatives to order on the Web with the ability to select from a complete sourcebook displaying all available designs and garments, enter the order, print a copy and review orders previously entered.

Lakeshirts had been using a custom computerized solution which proved cumbersome and inefficient. The sales reps entered orders over the Web into a home-grown database program. The database was then used to create an import file for the company's order entry system. A variety of databases was used to transmit work instructions and schedule production of the customized designs on the garments. Invoicing and inventory control were accomplished by an accounting software package, leaving many gaps and opportunities for errors in the chain from order entry through production and shipment to invoicing. In fact, as many as three days could elapse in getting an order to the production floor, necessitating the constant checking of orders by customer service to assure validity. The work of maintaining two systems was also costly and a drain on time and resources.

■ The Solution

Working with a team of six Lakeshirts employees representing accounting, customer service, line development, inventory and production, a business consultant established a system "wish list" to meet the needs of each area. A software review process subsequently narrowed the selection to SYSPRO



enterprise software, which embodied a majority of the “wish list” functions and which was also within the company’s price range. RT Enterprises, the local SYSPRO reseller, accomplished the software installation during the company’s slow season to minimize disruption.

Today, Lakeshirts exemplifies the fact that the application of technology can produce the efficiencies that a small business requires to compete successfully. SYSPRO handles all of the company’s accounting and production scheduling.

■ The Result

A Microsoft .NET-based Product Configurator enables Lakeshirts sales reps to configure products over the Web. The configurator ascertains that all order criteria are captured. After selecting the design and type of garment, the sales rep is automatically presented with a list of the valid placements and the available colors and sizes of the garments. Because the configurator is rules-based, the rep cannot make incompatible choices. Component dependencies are based on options, and selections are dependent on other selections. Moreover, additional charges, such as bagging and tagging, can be easily selected from a list with the correct pricing automatically added to the order.

Lakeshirts has also achieved very dramatic time-savings through the implementation of SYSPRO e.net solutions™, one of the first component-based architectures to leverage the Microsoft .NET Framework. Lakeshirts uses SYSPRO e.net solutions to automate processes, such as order entry, once done manually. This is enabling the company to reduce labor costs and also enhance order accuracy by eliminating human error. Through the use of COM (Component Object

Model) objects, orders placed by sales reps over the Web are automatically transacted directly in the SYSPRO database. The Web application passes information relating to the order to the SYSPRO COM object using the XML standard. The SYSPRO COM object, in turn, processes the transaction in real time. Orders are automatically printed out, and a job ticket is produced for each design with the various sizes and colors of garments. The job ticket is automatically transmitted to the production department. This solution replaces the old time consuming and error-prone order-entry process, speeding order turnaround, particularly during the company’s busiest seasons. Also, when orders are placed over the Web outside of the company’s normal business hours, they are immediately and automatically processed without order entry personnel. The result is that the majority of orders now arrive in production the same day they are received in the sales office, and are correctly documented with customer-specific information from the SYSPRO Customer Master File.

The solution also provides comprehensive reporting for the sales reps via the Web on a 24/7 basis, again saving customer service time and expense in generating and sending reports.

According to Lakeshirts, the return on investment in the SYSPRO solution was realized far more quickly than the company had anticipated.

Future company plans call for the continuing use of SYSPRO e.net solutions to provide real-time wireless transactions throughout the plant using 802.11b handheld scanning devices.