



SYTE

**How an Effective ERP  
Integration Is Helping  
Senox Corporation  
Delight Their Customers**

**SENOX<sup>®</sup>**

Senox Corporation has been serving the seamless gutter industry for over 50 years. As Senox founder A.B. Walters put it, “We service the seamless gutter industry. That’s all we do. If it has to do with gutters, we’re either doing it, thinking about doing it, or planning to do it. We’re thinking about gutters all the time.

Today Senox has manufacturing and service branches across the U.S. But one thing hasn’t changed as they’ve grown: Senox is family-oriented in every way.

The company isn’t just family-owned — coworkers and teammates are treated like family, contributing to a work atmosphere where everyone feels supported and people don’t mind pitching in on projects of all sizes.

Nicole Budworth (Chief Executive Officer), Larry Ingerly (Vice President of Finance) and Chris Chandler (Vice President of Branch Operations) spend their days providing distributors and contractors with all the supplies they need to install seamless gutters on homes across the country. Lucky for us, they agreed to take time out of their busy workdays to have a conversation about their recent experience getting their off-the-rails ERP implementation back on track.

This is Senox’s story of an ERP project gone awry — and their journey to transformational change.

## UNABLE TO SCALE WITH AN OUTDATED SYSTEM

“We currently have 22 stores across the Southeast and plan to continue to grow with more stores,” Nicole shares.

Because the lion’s share of Senox’s revenue comes from their branch stores, there are a lot of moving parts in the company that need to work together to keep things running smoothly.

Four years ago, Senox realized that relying on their outmoded DOS resource planning solution was causing a bottleneck in their plan to grow and scale. Inventory control is critical to keeping things running seamlessly across Senox sites, and it had become a struggle. They needed a more efficient system.

“We’re very good at making [products] and shipping them, but tracking was very manual and tedious,” Nicole says. “We had creatively found a way to use the data system in all of our branches separately, and then get all the data sent to corporate on a disk, then print it out and accumulate it all to get our company data.”

Chris notes that customers were complaining about their outdated processes and were vocal about telling Senox what they needed. “Customers want to pay online. They want to order through an app. They want to be able to view their account online. We weren’t able to do that within our old system.”

“The number one complaint we were hearing was about the speed,” he continues. “Customers were asking us ‘What’s taking so long?’ while we were waiting for something to print.”

In addition, when customers wanted to order from multiple branches, they had to set up new accounts — with new account numbers — for each store. That meant extra time and extra hassle for the customer.

Their old system was a point of frustration not just for customers, but also for employees. Chris told candidates during the Senox interviewing process that their system was going to be frustrating if they got hired. “We’re not a perfect company. I’m going to tell you right up front, this is going to be an issue,” he would tell candidates. “It was so bad.”

Knowing what all the issues were with their existing systems, the Senox team did everything in their power to make adjustments, customize their existing software and create better processes.

“We had done everything we knew to do to improve it and make it faster,” Chris says. “We upgraded the bandwidth on the internet. We upgraded the hardware. We brought in consultants from the software company. Nothing was working.”

## **THE CHALLENGES OF CONVERTING**

Senox committed to moving to a new ERP, and set to work trying to manage the implementation on their own. But they knew it would be challenging to figure out how to design the new system and manage the conversion.

Larry says, “I realized how complicated this system was and how difficult this implementation was going to be.” The team was overwhelmed, and the project soon got out of control.

Nicole looked back and noted, “In these implementations, there's always so much more than just the technology piece. A lot of times we think, we'll just bring in the software, install it, train people and we're done. But there are people, there are processes. There are all these different nuances. We spun our wheels for almost two years. It was just a lot of wasted effort, and that all has a cost and the burnout factor that we didn't consider on our staff.”

As frustration grew, the Senox management team was exquisitely aware that the stakes were high and consequences could be dire if things went off the rails with the implementation.

“One of our largest competitors changed to a new software company years ago, and it was a major change,” Chris says. “But it didn't go well. It went so badly that it ended up causing them to go out of business. And so it was real for us. We knew that if we got this wrong, that's going to be our reality. And we didn't want that. We worked too hard to get to this point to allow something like this to destroy the company.”

In the early days of the implementation, the team tried to bring in some people to assist, but they were frustrated by the lack of longer-term support.

“We had consultants for [the ERP platform] and the goal was they were going to come in periodically and help you do the job,” Larry says. “But what happened was they would come in for a few days

and they would give us a list of things to do, and then they would go away. And things weren't getting done and that went on for months.”

After years of struggling, they were frustrated and way over budget — and were still no closer to having a working ERP system. That’s when Syte Consulting Group stepped in to assist.

## **A MUCH-NEEDED HELPING HAND**

The Senox leadership team had met Syte Consulting Group CEO Erin Koss at a leadership event, and when they realized the ERP project had gone too far in the wrong direction, they called Erin to consult on the matter. It quickly became clear that the Syte team would be the perfect partners and support engine for Senox’s flagging ERP implementation.

“Syte has worked with a lot of different software systems that are out there, so they already knew the program, and there was a lot of support,” Chris said. “That’s what we needed, and having that outside perspective, as well. There are just so many different ways that they just instantly helped us.”

Larry noted how Syte’s experience made their lives easier on the Senox team. “Syte knew how to run a project. They knew how to implement an ERP system. And that you’ve got to do A, B, C and D in that order.”

To kick off the project, Nicole spent time going over Senox’s business process plan with Erin and the Syte team. The goal was to

document and assess every process and understand how things would change with the new system.

Senox walked through all the steps needed for a successful ERP implementation, gaining invaluable outside perspective.

“There are so many components of going from pen and paper to using handheld devices,” Chris said when talking about the complexity of the ERP. “What handheld device are you going to pick? How is that handheld going to integrate with your new point-of-sale system? How is that going to connect back to the main ERP system? And then how are you going to train the people? Just so many little things, and if you get any one of those wrong, it could be devastating.”

As the project progressed, Chris felt comforted by seeing how the Syte team fit right in with his colleagues, and they created a positive team culture that propelled them forward.

Chris says, “We're a family-owned business. We look at our teammates and our coworkers as family members. When we partnered with Syte, I felt like they became part of our family. They came in and just fit the culture. It was so easy for us to open up to them and just be honest and transparent. If we were scared about taking that next step, they would walk us through it.”

“When we finally did go live,” Chris says, “Erin came in with their whole team. We had all these group calls going on, and there was a lot of support. We needed to have people who were available no matter how many questions we had going on at one time, so that everyone out in the field in the branches felt like they were getting

the support that they needed. And that's what Syte provided for us.”

“Syte was logging issues as they came up on the calls, then one by one we were able to start going through and cleaning up that list and knocking stuff out. They helped us guide us and advise us and direct us...Syte was there the entire time, and still is.”

## **NOW INVENTORY IS A BREEZE AND CUSTOMERS ARE DELIGHTED**

Once the ERP rollout was complete, the Senox team immediately saw an improvement in their inventory control and customer service processes. Senox customers are thrilled with the dramatic increase in speed at the branches — and customers can now receive and pay invoices paperlessly.

Because of the new ERP, Senox has greatly improved efficiency at the warehouse, because staff members are using handheld devices to scan barcodes to put orders together. Now they always pull the right items in the right order.

Chris says, “It's really been a huge time saver for our managers in the office, but it's also causing the staff in the warehouse to become more efficient.”

Senox customers can also buy from any location. There is one account number assigned to every customer and that number is seamlessly accessible in all their branches.



Nicole also notes that the new ERP system helps them with quality control. “We're able to track our raw material all the way back from start to finish or in reverse back the other way, if there is a quality issue. We weren't able to do that before.”

## **THE FORECAST IS SUNNY FOR THE SENOX TEAM**

The Senox leadership now feels confident that the company will be able to grow and scale.

“We have 22 stores across the southeast and we have plans to continue to grow with more stores,” Nicole said. “The new ERP will allow us to do that, and manage all of our inventory throughout the entire system.”

The Senox management team now has far more insight into what it truly costs to manufacture their products. Because the new ERP helps them track labor, they are able to do full costing of everything they manufacture.

As a family-owned manufacturing company, Senox’s succession planning will depend on the availability of this insight. They now know the next generation of management will be able to make the right decisions for the company based on real data.

When we asked Chris what advice he has for other manufacturing businesses that are moving to new ERP systems, he said, “Don't do it alone...you need to have a partner. Someone who will be willing to walk with you through the whole process to hold you accountable when you're not meeting those deadlines. Syte was

there every step of the way...I just have so much thankfulness in my heart for everything they've done for us...I'm firmly convinced that we would not have been able to roll this new system out by ourselves."

Nicole added an extra note for Erin and the Syte team, saying, "Thank you for your support. We couldn't have done it without you."

**WE WOULD LOVE TO BE PART OF YOUR ERP  
SUCCESS STORY.**

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