

Case Study: Moving from Legacy Technology to a Cloud Enabled ERP Solution

Getting Technical: How one small distribution company leveraged the Cloud

Client Profile:

- Tri-State Steel
- Reidsville, NC
- <http://www.tri-statesteel.com/>
- Dedicated to meeting their clients' unique specifications rapidly and at a fair price.
- 16 employees

Executive Summary

Since 1982, Tri-State Steel has been distributing quality metals and providing exceptional services, to “mom-and-pop” shops, building contractors, large manufacturers, and fabricators.

TCS helped by:

- Being a trusted consultant, finding the best platform for their ERP software package enabled anywhere access of all content and complete mobility that the President required for the entire organization
- Transitioning all their data, applications, and services to the Cloud, so they can access all information securely and on-demand

Client Challenges

Tri-State Steel wanted to find a Cloud-based solution to improve their ability to meet customer needs and exceed their expectations. They wanted a solution that would give them the same functionality available to a large distribution company. With their AS400 IBM system, most processes were manual, and improvements were complex and burdensome. Tri-State's AS400 system had one person developing and supporting their software, which was a condition that would not help Tri-State to meet their goals.

Important to owner Steve Scott was the ability to work in real-time. “I needed to be able to run Tri-State Steel from anywhere at any time; customers did not need to be concerned [whether I was in or] out of the office for the day.” If you could expand that to the whole company, you would have a very customer-centric environment, “which would enable us to deliver excellence.” Scott was faced with questions such as, what would happen to Tri-State if they did not have their one-person support? How were they going to leverage technology to achieve their vision? Scott recognized that to become a player in the global market; they would need to take certain steps to implement a solution that would allow them to be a competitor while continuing to operate as a small business.

Scott started with an industry software vendor and interviewed multiple system integrators to meet his need to find a best in class software system that would be used by larger steel companies. One of his concerns was to be able to expand his business through mergers and acquisitions. In this case, the application needed to be adaptable to changes within the steel industry. The software also needed to be affordable and scalable. As part of the decision process, it was imperative that the industry software vendor was able to work closely with the system integrator so that Tri-State

could focus on running their business. “There was only one way to do this; the system integrator needed to understand and be able to work through what it was going to take to create an enterprise-class solution.”

Business continuity was at the core of this solution. Tri-State was worried about communication; they wanted a system that made it seamless. “The call you take from a customer may be the only time they have talked to a steel company today, even if that is your 999th call.” Tri-State wants to make the customer feel like they are the most important person they talked to today. Therefore, once an order was placed over the phone, production and response were nearly instantaneous, and communication was enhanced. Tri-State has been able to continue this thinking even with increased volume, with the Cloud-based solution. What was a source of employee frustration is now more job satisfaction.

How TCS Helped

The application vendor chosen did not support server virtualization technology. TCS recognized this during the quoting stage of the project and consequently won the business as the only firm to recognize this important distinction. TCS engineered a solution for Tri-State that gave them the look and feel of a cloud solution while allowing the application to run on the dedicated hardware that the vendor required. Placing the solution in the TCS Datacenter gave Tri-State the Cloud Solution they desired with redundant

Internet, redundant power and near line availability in the event of disaster.

Along with cloud-enabling their new Industry Software ERP System, TCS helped Tri-State move their email to the cloud and allow their file storage to be Cloud-based as well, effectively giving Tri-State what is normally called “Hosted Infrastructure.”

TCS setup the hosted infrastructure, the Remote Desktop environment that all users operated from and worked with the application vendor to install the software. TCS did all of this with very few interruptions to Tri-State's daily operations and on budget and within the time allotted. TCS succeeded in delivering a solution that will hold up over time.

Results, Return on Investment and Future

Specific Results:

- Combined the right software solution with the right cloud platform
- Enabled secure access to work remotely from anywhere
- Moved the email system to the Cloud
- Leveraged technology to allow paperless operations
- With the increased volume of business, the system has allowed employees to work efficiently without frustration. Happy employees = delighted customers

Tri-State’s modern-day solution helped them become efficient and significantly improve record keeping and data management. A cutting-edge company that knew what they wanted and partnered with a trusted systems integrator to deliver advanced technologically to meet their needs today and into the future.

“Metal is the conduit through which we deliver service.” Steve Scott

Do you have a project in mind? We would love to help you achieve your ideas. [Start your project now.](#)