

Checker Distributors Checks in with Monarch for Business Intelligence Made Easy

Checker Distributors has used Monarch for programming-free ERP business intelligence for years, after finding a leading BI tool "far too complex" for everyday use.

"Monarch is our front-line solution for the business intelligence we need on a daily basis throughout our organization."

Checker Distributors is a family-owned distributor of over 80,000 quilting, sewing and art needlework products based in Ohio, selling to independent retailers throughout North America since 1948. For nearly fifteen years, the company has consistently turned to Monarch for programming-free business intelligence, for effective shipping and inventory management, sales management, employee productivity and more.

"Checker Distributors sales are widely dispersed among thousands of independent-only retailers. Our overall number of sales transactions and shipments are about three times greater than a typical distributor with similar sales revenue," says Gina Krieger, IT Director for Checker Distributors. "This means a much higher degree of complexity in managing our business. Monarch has been absolutely essential in managing that complexity, by providing easy, user-friendly data access and analysis."

Checker Distributors' ERP solution came with a leading business intelligence tool included, "but we have found that tool to be far too complex," Gina explains. "Even worse, this BI tool sometimes yields data we cannot reconcile; it's simply incorrect. Instead, we use Monarch Pro to easily mine data from existing ERP reports or from data views sourced via our ERP database. With Monarch, we are assured of the integrity of the data, so we can work with the data with complete confidence.

"I can't imagine using this other BI tool to do all of the data access, filtering, summarization and exporting we easily perform in Monarch Pro, in no time at all. In fact, we use this other BI tool primarily

to create certain data views which are then analyzed and put to effective business use with Monarch Pro. Monarch is our frontline solution for the business intelligence we need on a daily basis throughout our organization."

It is imperative that Checker Distributors manages its unusually high number of shipments properly. "Monarch Pro enables us to effectively prioritize our shipments based on several criteria," Gina says.

"Monarch Pro mines data from several reports, including backorder reports and customer credit status reports, as well as mines data from a table containing shipment limitations; for example, certain customers may not accept partial shipment of an order.

"Once Monarch Pro combines all this data together, we utilize Monarch calculated fields and filters to identify and prioritize those shipments with the highest dollar value, with good credit, and no shipment limitations. We also use Monarch Pro to identify those high-dollar shipments which can't ship due to a past due invoice. This information empowers our accounts receivable department to contact those customers to collect that invoice quickly, in exchange for a quick shipping release of the customer's order."

Monarch is also actively used for the company's comprehensive sales reporting and analysis. "We regularly run a 10,000 page report, showing all current year versus last year sales," says Gina, "and use a Monarch Project to mine and export filtered views of the data for each salesperson, as well as by region, and more.

"Effective management of shipments, customer credit, sales and inventory is the heart of any distribution company's success. Monarch makes this success a reality... without programming and without the needless complexity of other BI solutions."

"We also create Monarch summary views of the data, including summary calculations of percent of gross sales, percent of all available products, and much more.

Monarch provides us with powerful sales reporting and analysis, with an ease of use and simplicity no other tool can match."

The power of Monarch is also prevalent in managing the company's inventory. "Each week, we run an overstock report and mine the data using Monarch, including Monarch filters based on criteria defined by the company's President," explains Angela Eischen, IT Specialist. "Monarch then exports the data to Excel, which is then provided to our buyers for action, such as returning certain products, or reducing or avoiding the future purchase of certain items. Monarch helps us proactively analyze and manage our inventory so small problems don't become big ones."

Monarch also helps fill in some existing gaps within Checker Distributors' ERP system. "Our customers might incur finance charges, but our ERP system does not yet allow us to issue a separate bill only for those finance charges," says Laura Keller, IT Specialist. "This is no problem with Monarch Pro: we mine data from our finance charges report, combine that data with other customer data, and export the final data to an Excel template to print those invoices on a monthly basis."

More recently, Checker Distributors implemented a new Monarch-powered campaign to improve employee productivity. "We will sometimes incur customer returns due to internal errors," explains Angela. "We recently completed a business process review which identified fifteen primary errors in shipping, order management, inventory and more, resulting in customer returns.

"We then developed a series of Monarch Pro projects to combine the data of several relevant ERP reports and tables to produce a comprehensive Excel workbook, identifying and aggregating these fifteen error types. This information will help us identify those employees in need of additional training and what business processes may need

reengineering. We look forward to achieving a month-to-month reduction in customer returns due to internal error, thanks to the information provided by Monarch."

"Effective management of shipments, customer credit, sales and inventory is the heart of any distribution company's success," adds Gina. "Monarch makes this success a reality for Checker Distributors, quickly and easily, without programming, and without the needless complexity of other BI solutions."



Information Made Easy™

www.datawatch.com

© 2007 Datawatch Corporation.
Monarch is a trademark of
Datawatch Corporation. All
other trademarks are properties
of their respective owners.