Malibu Boats

Customer Success Story

Custom-Boat Builder Provides International Dealer Network with Powerful Product Configuration Capabilities Through a Portal

Malibu Boats is the world's largest manufacturer of recreational watersports towboats with more than 450 employees and manufacturing facilities in California, Tennessee and Australia.

Challenge

Every Malibu Boat is uniquely configured based on customer specific preferences. They have to get the details right the first time or face delays, rework and ultimately, an unhappy customer. The company has 16 base models in its two model lines and no two boats come off the production line the same.

"We cater to the customer," says Greg Casteel, Senior Business Systems and Process Analyst. "We're known for the quality of our relationships with our customers and our dealers – and the fact that customers always get the boats customized the way they want them."

Meeting that commitment was a challenge. Malibu Boats relies on its extensive dealer network to promote and sell its high-end line of customized boats. But previously, Malibu didn't make it easy for dealers to configure and place orders via its online portal. Dealers had to sign on to two different systems to order models in Malibu's two different product lines. This, plus a lack of any rules-based system intelligence, increased the potential for errors. As in any business, errors can increase costs and delay deliveries.

Compounding the problem, the boat builder had a standalone order entry system, "but all it did was track orders," says Casteel. "It produced a piece of paper with specs for a boat, but we then had to go into our Microsoft

Loudon, TN
malibuboats.com

Corporate Details

Market-leader Malibu Boats manufactures high quality competitive ski boats and family-oriented wake-board boats. It offers 16 different models in its two product lines – and no two boats – once they're custom configured for customers – are ever the same. Malibu Boats has an international dealer network that drives production of 3,000+ boats annually.

Benefits

- Eliminates configuring incompatible options.
- Creates manufacturing production orders.
- Streamlines user engagement by integrating all systems.
- Customer portal wins high praise from dealers.
- Streamlines BOM generation process with accelerated, dynamic BOM drill down.
- Dynamic, data-driven product model costing functionality.

Products

- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Microsoft Dynamics GP

Dynamics GP ERP system and manually create a manufacturing order, the bills-of-materials, and pick list."

"Our wake-board boat line, for example, is family oriented. The smallest carries 10 to 12 people," Casteel says. "You can take everybody up to the lake for the weekend. But when ordering, you can't order two engines for this line. And if you order a shower, you have to have an engine that is compatible."

Solution

Malibu Boats began looking for a better solution in early 2013. After a thorough evaluation of leading CPQ solutions, they chose Experlogix CPQ. Right from the start, Experlogix resolved a critical issue that was the cause of considerable problems: it integrated seamlessly with Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and through CRM, with Microsoft Dynamics GP. "It connects everything together," he says. "Configuring an order automatically creates a manufacturing order, bills-of-materials, and the pick list. There's no opportunity for errors."

Another major problem area was also eliminated. Experlogix CPQ's powerful, flexible rules engine makes it possible to create rules that will only permit a configuration where everything works faultlessly together. This helps accurately guide dealers using the online portal to get the order right — the first time. This resulted in eliminating rework from misaligned boat models and options, which removed delays in getting orders to their dealers — and dealers getting the boats to their customers.

Experlogix CPQ also removed the need for two separate order entry systems — one for each major product line. The system handles both lines from a single sign on, eliminating the need for dealers to manually navigate between two systems to place orders.

Casteel maintains three different Experlogix environments. One is for development, one for test, and one for production. Experlogix CPQ was first set up in the development environment before being released to test, where he could conduct dealer training. System documentation was available via the customer portal, along with FAQs. Dealers were then allowed to "play around" with the system themselves, creating orders, getting used to the new system before the system went live.

Result

"It sounds minor, but one of the biggest benefits of the system was that dealers could access Experlogix CPQ using any browser," Casteel says. "They could be sitting on the showroom floor with a laptop, or at a boat show with a tablet and configure an order. That was not the case with the previous system — but in the real world, that flexibility is huge," he says.

The Experlogix solution also easily mastered the complexity of configuring highly intricate orders. "The complexity of our boats changes from model to model — and order to order," he says. "The Experlogix rules engine makes it possible to create rules where only permissible order configurations can be developed. And I can write a rule once, and apply it to as many other models as necessary. I don't have touch the code. All I need to do is check a box."

Experlogix CPQ is winning praise from dealers. "We have dealers with all levels of computer skills in their operations. Some are still running their businesses with pencil and paper. But everyone likes Experlogix because it so greatly simplifies things. The rules take care of so much — where our dealers no longer have to remember everything. Experlogix is extremely user friendly — and it takes the complexity out of configuring orders for our production lines."

Microsoft

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>
> *– Greg Casteel*
> *Senior Business Systems*
> *& Process Analyst*

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