



NexTec Steers Harland M. Braun & Co. Toward Digital Transformation

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About Harland M. Braun & Co.

Harland M. Braun & Co. Inc. has been supplying tanners throughout the world with quality hides and skins for over 60 years.

While much about the hide trading industry has remained constant over the decades, Harland M. Braun & Co. recognized that to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive and volatile marketplace, it would need to break from the herd and lead the brand into the 21st century. To accomplish that goal, the company partnered with NexTec Group and Acumatica.

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Chad Robertson, VP, Harland M. Braun & Co.



Key Results

- > Accurate transportation cost tracking results in more profitable deals
- > Moved from reliance on institutional knowledge to data-backed decisions
- > Anytime, anywhere access empowers a traveling workforce
- > Cloud ERP allows company to phase out on-premises servers for long-term cost savings

Operating in a New World Order

The company had been using QuickBooks for its accounting for years. However, customer orders, pricing, cost calculations, and shipment tracking were largely paper-based, manual processes that functioned only because an experienced team of tenured employees handled them.

“We’re fortunate to have many long-term employees who understand the business inside and out,” Chad Robertson, Vice President at Harland M. Braun & Co., explains. “The downside of that is that when they retire, they take all their institutional knowledge with them.”

Whenever the company hired a new employee, there was a huge drop-off in productivity because the new hire had to figure out where documents were filed, how pricing should be determined, and how to track and manage orders. “It just wasn’t sustainable any longer,” Robertson adds.

In addition, the company’s entire operating environment has changed. “When the pandemic hit, it flipped the transportation industry upside down,” says Robertson. “Shipping costs skyrocketed, and delays were commonplace. The disruptions illuminated some major holes in our processes. We struggled to track and manage our shipments and price our products accordingly.”

Moo-ving to Acumatica

Management knew that in order to successfully compete in a transformed post-pandemic landscape, it would need to modernize its technology and automate many of its time-consuming manual processes. To kickstart that process, Harland M. Braun & Co. engaged an ERP consultant to review available options. The consulting firm assembled three contenders, Acumatica Cloud ERP, SAP Business One, and Infor CloudSuite. It brought in vendors representing each application for demonstrations.

“We quickly realized that Acumatica would be our choice,” recalls Robertson. “Acumatica hits that sweet spot between broad functionality and ease of use. It provides for everything we need, gives us room to grow and diversify, and is simple to learn and intuitive to use.”

Robertson says they felt the SAP and Infor applications were overly complicated. “They didn’t seem to be designed for small to mid-sized companies like ours.”

In addition, Robertson says that NexTec Group, representing Acumatica, impressed the selection team. “They were the only vendor that took the time to learn about us and what we needed and tailor the presentation to our needs. The other two seemed intent on showing us what the products could do, while NexTec showed us what we could do with the product.”

Cloud Housing Levels the Field

With Acumatica’s cloud-hosting model, Harland M. Braun & Co. can now phase out its on-premises servers, lowering expenses and demand on its limited IT resources.

“We don’t have an IT department, so one of us had to shoulder the duties of maintaining our technology—taking time from our primary tasks,” Robertson explains. “We expect to see significant cost savings by moving to the cloud. But the biggest benefit is the accessibility the cloud delivers. For example, I recently traveled to Korea and could tap into Acumatica to get the information I needed for a client meeting. That simply wasn’t possible before.”

Fencing in Costs

Acumatica is also helping Harland M. Braun & Co. solve one of its biggest challenges— tracking all the costs associated with getting a customer’s order from Point A to Point B. “Ocean freight and trucking fees are our largest expenses,” says Robertson. “We need to come up with our best estimate of those costs to accurately price the orders. Before Acumatica, that best estimate was based on the salesperson’s experience. But again, that’s not sustainable or scalable. With Acumatica, we can now track those costs and refer to them as we price new orders.

NexTec showed the company a brilliant solution. They set up non-stock items in Acumatica to represent common legs in an order’s journey and the myriad costs associated with the trip, such as storage or duty charges. “For example, we created an item for Los Angeles to Qingdao,” explains Robertson. “When we pay a vendor invoice in Acumatica, we reference that item. Then, our sales team can easily look in Acumatica to see what we’ve been paying for that route recently.”

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No More Hiding the Facts

Previously, the company had no easy or direct insight into these transportation costs, so the sales reps would take an educated guess or use the most recent rate they recalled—either being a potentially costly decision.

“It’s quite possible we lost deals because we quoted too high a price based on those estimates,” Robertson notes. “It’s also quite possible we lost revenue by quoting too low. Now, we’re making data-backed pricing decisions that give us confidence and allow us to turn around quotes quickly to win more deals.”

Steering a Successful Path Forward

Another best practice NexTec shared with Harland M. Braun & Co. was using Acumatica subaccounts to track supplier activity. In Acumatica, subaccounts are secondary posting accounts allowing users to classify transactions further.

By establishing a subaccount for each supplier, Harland M. Braun & Co. can generate profit and loss statements by supplier, providing deeper insights into the profitability of each relationship.

Robertson says that companies like Harland M. Braun & Co. are smart to partner with providers like NexTec that allow them to reap the benefits of next-generation technology while preserving their internal resources to build and grow the business.

“What makes NexTec a good business partner is their overarching commitment to our success,” he concludes. “Throughout the implementation and continuing to this day, they remain responsive, patient, collaborative, and creative. They share best practices approaches and teach us new and creative ways to use Acumatica to improve our operations. We’re pleased to have them on our team.”



Connect with a NexTec expert to explore how a modern ERP can improve your business.

Let's Talk

Contact Us

844-466-8477

info@nextecgroup.com

NextecGroup.com

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