



## EZ Office Products

www.ezop.com



### At A Glance:

- **Company:** EZ Office Products
- **Location:** Madison, WI
- **Industry:** Office Supply; Wholesale/Distribution; Ecommerce
- **Challenges:**
  - Finding the technology—including integrated CRM, ecommerce, and accounting functionality—that would enable a startup office-products company to compete alongside huge national chains
- **Other software considered:** DDMS, Red Cheetah, Microsoft Axapta, Microsoft Navision, SAP, QuickBooks, MAS 500
- **Results with NetSuite:**
  - Sales per employee, at \$320,000 per year, far exceed industry average of \$225,000 to \$250,000 per year
  - Real-time sales and customer information enables a more timely analysis of business trends—and potential problems



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— Gary Molz, Vice President, EZ Office Products

### The Results:

For startup office products companies—facing competition not just from other small businesses but from industry giants like Staples and Office Depot—turbocharged productivity is crucial for success. In less than one year using NetSuite, EZ Office Products has seen its revenues per employee soar past the industry standard.

“Typically, the average sales per employee in the office-products industry is about \$225,000 to \$250,000 per year,” says Gary Molz, vice president at EZ Office Products. “We’re at \$320,000 per employee—and we fully expect to reach \$500,000. NetSuite has enabled us to compete in an environment where a few big chains have driven thousands of independent office-supply companies out of business.”

NetSuite’s real-time delivery of sales and customer data means that EZ Office Products can home in on opportunities—and potential problems—faster than rivals using non-integrated, industry-specific products. “NetSuite lets us acquire, retain, and maximize our customers,” says Molz. “We can quickly see what they are buying and when they are buying it, and what they are not buying. That’s crucial for a repeat business like ours. When we see a customer hasn’t ordered in a while, we know to call or email them. NetSuite has let us take a huge leap forward.”

### The Challenges:

Steering a business from startup to success is a challenge in the best of circumstances; in the office supply business, however, the risks, and the odds, can be particularly chilling. Smaller companies not only have to beat back their rivals, but compete against the big, office-supply behemoths that have come to rule the market. “In the 1970’s there were some 15,000 independent office products companies,” says Molz. “Then Staples and Office Depot came and devoured them. Of the businesses that remain, 50 percent are stuck in their old, low-tech ways. They’re just waiting to go out of business.”

Molz knows plenty about those old, low-tech ways. For 29 years, he had worked in his family’s office supply and furniture business. He saw industry-specific software packages

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that didn't do enough, or didn't keep up with new operating systems and hardware. He saw companies beaten and ruined. But he also saw a prospect. “There is a tremendous opportunity for growth for those businesses that embrace change,” says Molz. “If you're progressive and use technology to find and win business, you can compete with the billion-dollar companies—and you can prosper.”

And that's exactly what Molz had in mind when he helped found EZ Office Products—a 6-person startup selling everything from paper clips to office furniture—in January 2006. By applying new technologies to an old industry, Molz reasoned, he could leave small competitors behind, and hold his own against big ones. The challenge, however, was finding those new technologies. The software packages that dominated the industry were sadly lacking. “Office supply businesses used packages like DDMS, which was DOS-based, old, and decrepit,” says Molz. “Or Red Cheetah, which had maybe 50 to 70 users, so you worried whether it would be around long, or updated.”

The bigger problem was that none of these programs integrated the full suite of features office supply companies needed—from CRM to ecommerce to accounting. Nor could they create reports in anything approaching real-time. “You were always looking at data that was 2 or 3 weeks old,” says Molz. If EZ Office Products was going to succeed, that simply wasn't going to cut it. “Operating a business through the rear view mirror is a lot harder than looking out the windshield,” says Molz.

Yet if the industry-specific software wasn't promising, neither were the bigger, more general packages. Molz looked at, and rejected, a host of major players: “MAS 500 was really strong in accounting, but not integrated; QuickBooks didn't have all the capabilities we needed; SAP looked very expensive and labor-intensive.”

NetSuite, however, looked to fit the bill: Not only did it integrate CRM, marketing, accounting, ecommerce, and real-time reporting, but it could be launched quickly—EZ Office Products wanted to be up and running in just one month—and its Web-based interface meant that the system could be accessed from any location. “I liked that I could be anywhere in the world and still run the business,” says Molz. There was one other key benefit, too, he adds: “We wanted to steer clear of hardware; we couldn't afford the upkeep. With the system running on NetSuite's servers, and not our own equipment, that's no longer a worry.”

### **The Solution:**

NetSuite, Molz discovered, brought another big advantage to the table: It was flexible. EZ Office Products wanted to use GOPD's OP24-7 shopping cart—one of the few office-products-specific technologies that did deliver results. It wanted to integrate NetSuite with GOPD—something that had never been done before. So NetSuite and GOPD partnered to link the two platforms, creating an integrated system that doesn't just help EZ Office Products, but any office products business looking to tie its online sales with robust CRM and accounting functionality. “It's an effortless integration,” says Molz. “Orders are brought into NetSuite every five minutes, seamlessly.”

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Since launching NetSuite in 2006, EZ Office Products has been using the system for marketing, inventory management, accounting, order tracking, CRM, and payroll. Data is now keyed in once — instead of repeatedly entered into different packages. “The key thing about NetSuite is that you’re no longer worrying whether your numbers are wrong somewhere, or whether one program can talk to another, which was always a problem when you had a patchwork of software,” says Molz. “Now you can focus on your business, instead.”

Real-time financials have been a particularly important feature: It used to be a real struggle just to have our financials ready on the 15th of the month,” says Molz. “With NetSuite, they’re available every day, and constantly updated.” NetSuite’s dashboards enable Molz and his partners to home in on key performance metrics — discovering, at a glance, where EZ Office Products is succeeding, and where it needs to work harder.

“Everyone in the company has a customized NetSuite dashboard,” says Molz. “On my own, I can look at sales today, or sales this month, or income, expenses, and profit. I can see how much revenue my sales representatives are bringing in this month, and see my top customers — as well as my least profitable ones.”

In the increasingly competitive office-products market, a 360-degree view of business isn’t just a competitive edge — it’s the difference between success and failure. “With NetSuite, I get all the information I need to focus on opportunities, and fix any problems,” says Molz. “And because it is Web-based and requires no special hardware, NetSuite will enable us to expand into new locations far more quickly and more easily than many of our rivals.”