



RAPID CONN GROUP OF COMPANIES GROWING A MULTINATIONAL BUSINESS WITH SAP® BUSINESS ONE

“SAP Business One enables our multinational company to capture, process, and access real-time information from any location, which is critical to our success. The solution provides a solid foundation for growing our business.”

Balaji Raghunathan,

VP of Operations, Rapid Conn Inc.

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: Rapid Conn Group of Companies
- Headquarters: Foothill Ranch, California
- Industry: High tech
- Products and services: Connectors and cable assemblies
- Revenue: US\$12.3 million
- Employees: 20
- Web site: www.rapidconn.org
- Implementation partner: Softengine Inc.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Improve operations by eliminating redundancies and reliance on manual processes
- Increase efficiency by replacing disconnected software
- Enable better inventory control
- Make better decisions with access to real-time data

Objectives

- Implement flexible, easy-to-use enterprise resource planning software to integrate business processes and information
- Automate processes to help ensure accuracy and save time
- Establish a solid foundation to support growth

SAP® Solutions and Services

SAP® Business One application

Implementation Highlights

- Use of train-the-trainer model
- Wide use of new software

Why SAP

- Support for core business processes and customization
- Proven solution in similar environments
- Easy to understand and use

Benefits

- 35% reduction in time to establish and track requests for proposals
- 50% reduction in time to produce purchase orders
- 60% reduction in time to generate monthly sales reports
- 40% reduction in time to produce inventory reports
- 96% increase in inventory accuracy
- Annual savings of \$30,000 in inventory-related costs
- Ability to work more efficiently and grow without adding resources

Existing Environment

- Peachtree financial software
- Legacy purchase-order processing software

How do you ensure smooth communications and data availability across operations in different countries and time zones? That was the challenge facing the Rapid Conn Group of Companies, which designs, manufactures, and distributes connectors and cable assemblies for companies worldwide.

As the company grew, siloed information and reliance on manual processes across its four wholly owned subsidiaries in the United States, Malaysia, Singapore, and China made it difficult to run efficient operations. "We couldn't effectively compete in a global economy when we were missing opportunities to land new business and keep existing customers satisfied," explains Balaji Raghunathan, VP of operations for Rapid Conn Inc. in the United States.

Manual Processes and Disconnected Systems Hinder Efficiency

Rapid Conn's various locations were using spreadsheets, a legacy purchase-order processing system, and outdated finance software to manage daily work. As a result, employees struggled to stay abreast of processes, issues, and opportunities. For example, Rapid Conn lost track of many requests

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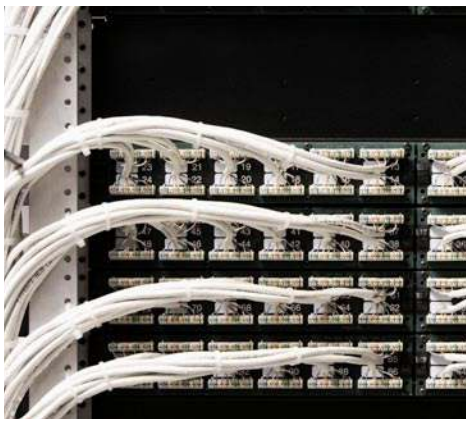
With a goal of maintaining global leadership by rapidly satisfying customer requirements for high-quality parts, Rapid Conn is committed to streamlining its work processes wherever possible. What it needed was a single platform on which to run its business. Rapid Conn found that solution in the SAP® Business One application.

for proposals (RFPs) because the information was stored on a single desktop computer with no support for enterprise-wide access. "We might receive 100 inquiries in a month but only convert one into new business either because we weren't aware of the opportunity or failed to respond quickly enough," says Raghunathan.

Rapid Conn would receive requests via e-mail, fax, or its Web site. An employee would forward the request to the engineering department to determine whether or not Rapid Conn could meet the requirements. If necessary, the sales organization would step in to gather more information from the prospective customer. "Our employees were struggling to keep track of all the details via e-mail and phone calls," continues Raghunathan.

Wasting Time and Making Errors

The problems associated with a reliance on manual processes and communication trickled down to other operational areas. In addition to challenges consolidating data and tracking opportunities, employees found it difficult to access important information all the way through to delivery. Employees in the California warehouse struggled to ascertain what materials were in transit, what components were being manufactured, and what had already shipped. Because information was tracked in a spreadsheet or in a book in the warehouse, it was prone to data-entry errors and misinterpretation. "Orders were sometimes lost, and numbers and addresses were entered incorrectly. These issues threatened to undermine relationships with our customers, but hiring more people wasn't the answer – they would just create additional errors," says Raghunathan.



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These issues also made it difficult to manage daily tasks. It could take up to two days to produce an accurate inventory report, as employees gathered and aggregated data from sources in different locations. Employees in California often struggled to determine the status of component orders, a good percentage of which were manufactured overseas. Without easy access to inventory-related information, employees would either order unnecessary materials or fail to have enough in stock. In fact, inventory accuracy was typically 80% or less.

Because Rapid Conn was trying to process and track sales using accounting software, it was unable to produce consolidated reports and optimize its workflow. It took three to four days for employees in one location to aggregate information needed to produce monthly sales reports. It took even longer to produce reports that reflected enterprise-wide activities and forecasts. Just as important, employees were unable to identify important trends. Plus, management lacked access to timely reports needed to inform critical decisions.

Finding the Right Solution and Implementation Partner

Once the company decided to address its issues, a committee was established to identify and evaluate potential solutions. The group, consisting of heads from each department, defined the

criteria for a new solution. “We wanted it to be reliable, proven, customizable to meet our needs, and easy to understand and use,” explains Raghunathan.

After a thorough search, the committee decided on the SAP Business One application. “SAP Business One was the obvious choice. Its range of functionality, support for an interactive process flow, and adaptability to our processes were second to none,” continues Raghunathan.

Rapid Conn also chose Softengine Inc. as its implementation partner. Softengine quickly understood Rapid Conn’s needs, suggested how the company could use the SAP solution to streamline its process flow, and helped identify process redundancies. In addition, it had experience implementing SAP Business One in similar environments. As a result, Softengine was able to ensure a rapid deployment. “We were up and running in 15 days. After just a few days training our department heads and superusers, Softengine had nearly three-quarters of our employees – across sales, finance, customer service, purchasing, shipping, and logistics – using the application,” says Raghunathan.

Transforming Business with Easy Access to Real-Time Data

Due to integrated processes and consolidated information, Rapid Conn has transformed its operations. “We now have much better control over the

RFP process. In fact, we can establish and track an RFP 35% faster than before,” says Raghunathan.

In addition, the SAP Business One application enables Rapid Conn to convert a sales order to a purchase order with the click of a button. “We can now create purchase orders in half the time, which is a tremendous savings since we process an average of 250 orders per month,” continues Raghunathan.

Furthermore, because SAP Business One automatically transfers information from the sales order to the purchase order, all customer information is accurately captured. That means the company’s manufacturing facility in China has clear visibility into all order details. Plus, sales representatives in Singapore and Malaysia can easily access all shipping information via a single screen. It now takes 60% less time to produce a monthly sales report.

Improving Visibility and Traceability

The intuitive interface also makes it easy to trace an order from start to finish with just a few clicks. Plus, employees can easily run queries and generate reports. “Comparing our enterprise-wide visibility before and after implementing SAP Business One is like comparing night and day. Now we can do things such as quickly determine what percentage of our sales effort is converting to business,” explains Raghunathan.

Equally important, employees are no longer duplicating efforts and working inefficiently. "With all information available from a single source, we eliminate redundancies such as creating a requirements document or ordering material that already exists in our system," says Raghunathan.

Better visibility and automated processes have also helped improve inventory accuracy. In fact, Rapid Conn has raised its inventory accuracy to 96% and estimates that it saves close to US\$30,000 annually. Plus, it can produce inventory reports about 40% faster than before. "With SAP Business One, we can easily generate reports required to satisfy a variety of regulations," continues Raghunathan.

Gaining a Solid Foundation for Future Growth

Now that it knows it can run its operations so much more efficiently and effectively with SAP Business One, Rapid Conn anticipates the solution will play a large role in the company's future. For example, Rapid Conn will soon establish a Taiwan office and implement SAP Business One there. "SAP Business One enables our multinational company to capture, process, and access real-time information from any location, which is critical to our success. The solution provides a solid foundation for growing our business," concludes Raghunathan.



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