



Finished Goods Allocation A Perfect Fit For Dan Post Boot Company

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The folks at Dan Post Boot Company are fond of saying that everyone has owned at least one pair of cowboy boots in their lifetime. The successful forty-year old company based in Clarksville, Tennessee markets and distributes the Dan Post, Dingo, and Laredo brands of Western boots. From pairs that remain true to their rugged origins to rhinestone-studded pairs representing the height of Western fashion, the company has come to symbolize the finest in both style and comfort. Longtime users of Ensemble Business Software, Dan Post Boot Company (Dan Post) recently added the Finished Goods Allocation module, to stomp out a nagging order allocation issue.

Waiting For The Other Boot To Drop

Before the Finished Goods Allocation module, the day’s orders were printed and sent to the warehouse where two experienced employees would review every order by hand; sorting hundreds of orders into stacks of what they thought could be filled, and further by customer priorities, ship date promises, and cancellation dates. Warehouse personnel would then take the prioritized stack of picking tickets and begin pulling stock. It was an inefficient, labor-intensive process taking virtually all day.

Warehouse personnel might waste time picking most of the items for an order only to discover they were short one critical item. Expedited requests could be overlooked in the rush to manage the day’s orders, resulting in a missed ship date—and an unhappy customer. Many orders reference cancel dates, meaning an order not filled by the cancel date generate no revenue. Dan Post recog-

nized the system had the potential for big problems.

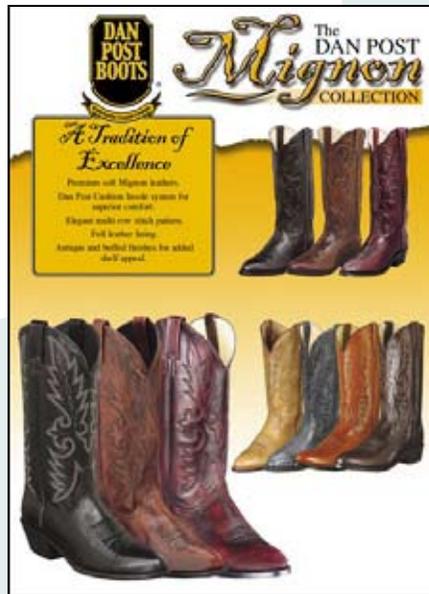
Ensuring its orders are processed accurately, efficiently, and promptly has always been the goal, but the company needed a reliable, even intelligent tool to aid its hardworking personnel achieve that goal.

Spurred Into Action

The company hired Andrew Ward, a warehousing expert and IT consultant to help with the challenge.

Ward turned to the publisher of the accounting and operations software the company has relied on for years—Ensemble Business Software.

Ensemble understood the company’s business needs and proposed Ensemble Business Software’s sophisticated **Finished Goods Allocation module**. The Finished Goods Allocation module allows companies to define specific business rules governing how orders are selected for fulfillment. Once the rules are defined, the software judiciously selects which orders can be filled based on customer priorities, ship complete percentages, cancel dates, promise dates, or a myriad of other potential variables.



The new Finished Goods Allocation software saves labor and increases shipped volumes for Dan Post Boots.

Seamless Implementation

After Ward and Dan Post’s management team defined the business rules governing their order fulfillment, Ensemble set up a test system for Dan Post allowing them to perform trial allocations on a demo database. “Ensemble had a solution for every allocation rule we came up with,” recalls Ward.

Next, Ward developed test scripts by creating orders specifically to test each business rule and “the software performed exactly as promised.” Finally Ward ran



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the allocations on a copy of Dan Post's actual order file, "We put our production data through the test and the results were exactly what we expected. There were absolutely no problems."

The live implementation took place over a weekend. Ensemble's consultants were available around the clock should their assistance be needed. The implementation was seamless—Dan Post began shipping boots Monday morning without a single hitch.

Ward was impressed by the very short learning curve required to use the software, especially given its necessary complexity. "We showed the staff how to run the allocations once, and then they took over. I credit both good design and proper training."

Ensemble's fair and reasonable pricing for the project further impressed Ward, "Ensemble delivered on their promises, and we didn't get hit with a big bill."

Capacity Nearly Doubles

With the first allocation, staff noticed an immediate change; the allocation was very large, much larger than the old manual allocation. Immediately Dan Post began to ship more orders each day. The efficiency gained was enormous—shipping capacity shot from 3,500 pairs of boots daily to over 6,000 pairs a day!

Since the picking tickets now print only what can be picked, there is no wasted effort looking for product that isn't there.

Finished Goods Allocations made the picking process so efficient that during the first week, completed orders began piling up behind the shipping stations. To step up the pace, a third shipping station was added and a former order picker was re-assigned to the station.

No longer is the company reliant on the experience and intuition of two full-time staff members to review and allocate each order. Now with automation, the entire allocation process, previously consuming two people's entire day, now takes one person less than one-half hour!

"The labor and time savings is enormous," says Ward, "The software paid for itself immediately. No cost/benefit analysis was required for this project—there is no doubt in anyone's mind this project was a huge success."

Room To Grow

Ward has had much experience with expensive, enterprise-level warehouse solutions such as SAP and Oracle. The flexibility and options available in the Ensemble Finished Goods Allocations module rival and in some areas surpass those present in the other systems, he says.

Flexible fulfillment options include the ability to fulfill by: Customer, Order, Line, or Item SKU. The module also includes the ability to specify the percentage of amount, quantity, or lines filled to qualify an order for release. At any time, management may choose to run a pseudo allocation, and play with the parameters of the allocation at run time. For example they might drop the fulfillment percentage to determine an optimal shipping volume.

Over the past few years, the Western-Wear industry has been booming; Dan Post Boot Company has seen demand for its products skyrocket. Without the Ensemble Finished Goods Allocation module, Ward suspects the company might not have been able to capitalize on this boom.

Dan Post Boot Company and Ensemble Business Software make one successful pair.



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