



Hillhouse Naturals Ships More, Faster with QuickBooks Compatible Software

Baus Systems' SmartScan software and QuickBooks give this home fragrance manufacturer one comprehensive solution that provides sales order, invoice, shipping, and general business management.

AT A GLANCE:



COMPANY: Hillhouse Naturals Farm, Ltd.



LOCATION: Wickliffe, KY



INDUSTRY: Manufacturing



BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

Hillhouse Naturals needed to upgrade from an old DOS shipping and accounting management system to increase efficiency and take advantage of new technologies.



SOLUTION:

SmartScan Sales Order Verification, SmartScan Invoice Verification, and SmartScan Label Link by Baus Systems, and QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions.



RESULTS:

Together, Baus Systems' SmartScan software and QuickBooks:

- Reduced shipping turnaround times from 1-2 weeks to 2-5 days
- Provided better quality control
- Freed Hillhouse to take advantage of other new technology options

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Wendy Elrod
Business management consultant
for Hillhouse Naturals Farm, Ltd.



Hillhouse Naturals Farm, Ltd. manufactures and distributes home fragrance products — including candles, potpourri, fragrant oils, sachets, and accessories — primarily to spas and large department stores. Once the company built its web site, customers started to contact Hillhouse Naturals directly, wanting to buy products online. In response, Hillhouse Naturals added an online retail component to its business. The company has 30 employees and 100 outside representatives.

Business Challenge

Hillhouse Naturals has been in business since 1986. They started using an old DOS program some years ago to manage the business, which included a scanning solution for its shipping department. This scanning feature is critical, because it helps ensure that the pull, pack and ship process results in correct order fulfillment and invoicing.

As time went on and available technologies improved, the DOS program seemed more and more cumbersome. It also limited the company's ability to upgrade to newer, better solutions. The program had been custom built for the company, so only the original author of the software could fix it when there were problems. When that developer moved out of state, the company started to worry about future upgrades and support. "They

were putting themselves at risk for a major meltdown," recalls Wendy Elrod, their business systems and accounting consultant.

Around the same time, UPS started to offer integration with new shipping management technologies, selling compatible hardware at a discount to encourage customers to switch over. Hillhouse took advantage of the price break and installed the hardware. The old DOS software worked with the new components, but it was tedious for employees to operate.

On top of that, the company's network support and hardware provider had long been encouraging the company to make the move to QuickBooks. With the reasons to upgrade piling up, they evaluated QuickBooks and decided it was time for a change. They went looking for something to manage the company's sales, inventory, and invoicing, as well as work with the shipping hardware and QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions.

Solution Overview

"As an independent consultant for many clients, I've come to respect and rely on the QuickBooks Solutions Marketplace to find QuickBooks Compatible software," says Elrod.

"Looking at our options there, several software products from Baus Systems seemed like the strongest," she remembers. "I contacted them



and a few other developers, and interviewed people at each company. Baus was the most available, and the easiest to work with.”

One of things Elrod liked best about Baus was that she could always speak with a real person, and get answers in layman’s terms. “They’re good at explaining what their software can do,” she says. “They also provided demos for us to test drive. Once we tested it, we knew it was the best choice.”

Hillhouse Naturals now uses three applications from Baus Systems: SmartScan Sales Order Verification, SmartScan Invoice Verification, and SmartScan Label Link. All of the applications can exchange data with QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions. Together, they make one complete business management tool.

Business Benefits

The results are clear. Using their old system, Hillhouse had a staff of four shippers in its warehouse, and typically shipped orders between one and two weeks after the order date. With the new system, they’ve reduced the average turnaround time to two days with a staff of just three shippers. One week is now the maximum shipping turnaround during the busiest times of the year. Elrod says, “The shipping staff can now complete the scanning of their orders faster, so they can ship more boxes more efficiently.”

In addition to cutting turnaround times, the new system has helped Hillhouse find and fix problems before they ship and invoice. “Because of the quality control that QuickBooks and the Baus software provides, the shippers can see right away if the

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person who took the order made a mistake. The scanning process doesn’t work unless the order is right.”

Hillhouse began the switchover to the new system in July of 2005. Two months later, in September, they made the final transition to running completely on the new system. “We had some special needs and requests, and Baus accommodated us every step of the way,” says Elrod.

All three QuickBooks Compatible Baus applications share customer, sales order, invoice, inventory, and item information with QuickBooks, which saves countless hours of data entry time. And, the system has been easy to use. “Sharing data between the applications is very easy and automatic,” says Elrod.

Upgrading has provided many unforeseen benefits as well. Hillhouse Naturals is now able to explore more and more of today’s technology options such as remote access of their QuickBooks company file and processes. They’re also now working to add FedEx as a shipping vendor for their retail orders, which wasn’t feasible using the old system.

Elrod attests to the dependable customer support she and her client receive from Baus Systems. Located in Western Kentucky, they’re within a few hours’ drive of the region’s big cities. But with Baus, they know they’re always only an email or phone call away. “Baus is very good about returning our calls promptly,” says Elrod.

Elrod and her client have been similarly pleased with QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions, which is the hub for the Baus SmartScan software. “I’ve been working with QuickBooks for 15 years, and I think it’s the best solution for small to medium-sized businesses, especially now that there’s so much QuickBooks Compatible software available. I’ve been affiliated with Great Plains in the past to support my larger clients,” says Elrod. “But once Microsoft® took it over, it became unaffordable.”

“We’re super happy with the people at Baus Systems, their customer support and their great products,” says Elrod. “They take great pride in serving their customers and making their products better every year.”

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