

TECSYS Customer Success Story



At a Glance

Industry

Giftware

The Challenge

The business has grown significantly from a start-up company to one with \$20 million in sales. With a large inventory, the challenge for their paper-based operation was being able to keep up with the demands of major retail chains (up to 300 orders per day).

TECSYS' Solution

TECSYS' WMS and PointForce Integrated Solution.

The Benefits

An end-to-end supply chain execution solution that supports the company's 30% growth and enables it to serve both its small customers as well as major retail chains.

WMS-Enabled TECSYS PointForce Empowers Natural Life's 30% Growth and Compliance with Major Retail Chains

"It made a lot of business sense for us to get the WMS software from the same supplier as PointForce, our back office system. TECSYS WMS' robust and feature-rich solutions along with its integration to PointForce Enterprise provide us with the best end-to-end supply chain execution solution in the giftware industry."

*Jeff Struble
CIO, Natural Life Inc.*

About Natural Life

Natural Life is a creative company with a powerful lifestyle brand that promotes a positive message that all girls will love. From clothes and accessories to household items and gifts, everything is fresh yet nostalgic, embellished for a handcrafted look, and affordable. Natural Life's mission is to inspire girls of all ages with their free-spirit style to live happily and have fun.

Natural Life designs all of its own products and sources them primarily from the Far East. The majority of the business is selling wholesale to gift, apparel, home, and other retailers, both independent stores and major chains. In addition, Natural Life has a rapidly expanding direct-to-consumer business through its www.naturallife.com website.

Natural Life's CEO, Founder and Chief Creative Guru, Patti Hughes, started the business in the mid 1990s when she found that her friends and family treasured her photographs of simple sentiments written in the sand. Over the years the product line expanded from framed photographs to magnets and keepsakes and eventually to anything and everything girls love.

After overcoming the many hurdles that confront a young company, what was once a home-based start-up is now a 50-employee business nearing \$20 million in sales, working out of an office and warehouse facility measuring thousands of square feet. Business is booming, with a double-digit growth rate in spite of the worst economic recession in recent memory.

Challenges

The business has grown significantly, from a start-up to some \$20 million in sales, facing distribution challenges that include:

- Significant inventory – 2500 SKUs
- 100 to 300 orders per day
- Paper-based warehouse operations

- Fulfilling orders to large retail chains, independent retailers and individual consumers
- Direct, simultaneous delivery to some chains with over 300 stores
- The ability to fulfill transactions placed through e-commerce and directly with the Customer Experience team

Natural Life has been using TECSYS' PointForce Enterprise solutions for almost a decade. Over the years, the Company has gradually added modules and upgraded to the latest release of the software to manage its gifts and accessories business. TECSYS' PointForce, specifically designed for small- to mid-sized giftware and import-to-retail distributors, is a robust suite of applications that include: Advanced Order Management, Purchasing, Forecasting and Product Management, Customer Service Tools, EDI, Accounting Suite and E-Commerce.

Before TECSYS' WMS



Until recently, and prior to selecting and deploying TECSYS' Warehouse Management Software (WMS), Natural Life's warehouse operations used paper-based orders, manual credit card verification and paper-based inbound and outbound processes. These

processes were very slow and time consuming and could no longer support the volume of the business and the growth of the Company. Furthermore, management had little or no visibility into their warehouse operations (such as status of orders, level of inventory and delivery commitments) to be able to respond to its clients effectively. With these

challenges in mind, Natural Life's supply chain managers researched the top warehouse management software suppliers, and after a stringent evaluation process, they selected TECSYS' WMS.

"We looked at several warehouse management software vendors in the industry. Although most of the vendors have similar product capabilities, TECSYS came equipped with unique features specific to our industry, advanced functions such as software scalability to grow with us as we grow, Visual Logistics and advanced inventory tracking and visibility that provide real-time information to our people particularly customer service. All and all, while the software represents the backbone to our logistics operation, TECSYS' professionals truly understand our business and their experience and expertise in the industry is second to none," commented Struble.

Natural Life's distribution center is now automated with system-directed inventory putaway and picking. All transactions are recorded electronically through RF technology, packages are selected automatically with TECSYS' advanced "Volumetrics and Containerization" functions that pre-determine the right size and quantity of shipping container based on the order in hand. Typically, customer orders are received at the end of the day or at night. The order is reviewed in the morning by warehouse operations and is released to the floor to be picked, packed and shipped, usually within 24 to 48 hours maximum. Prior to deploying TECSYS' WMS it used to take days.

Last but not least, tracking of orders is enabled through TECSYS' visibility tools that give Natural Life's logistics managers and customer service personnel real-time information at their fingertips so they can respond to their clients with virtually no delays.

"It made a lot of business sense for us to get the WMS software from the same supplier as PointForce, our back office system. TECSYS WMS' robust and feature-rich solutions along with its integration to PointForce Enterprise provide us with the best end-to-end supply chain execution solution in the giftware industry. It empowers us every day to reduce warehouse inefficiencies, increase order accuracy and help us deliver stellar customer service. Thanks to TECSYS and its people."

**Jeff Struble, CIO
Natural Life Inc.**



TECSYS' WMS Deployment Choices

Internet-based with a service-oriented architecture (SOA), TECSYS' open system software applications can be deployed on premise, be hosted applications or deployed as a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model. Natural Life opted for the hosting model that allows the organization to run TECSYS' top-tier WMS application without having to deal with the technology infrastructure, freeing up their people to focus on the business. The underlying IT infrastructure of TECSYS' WMS for Natural Life is a fully-redundant, remotely-hosted WMS application running on Microsoft SQL Server.

With TECSYS, Natural Life has a reliable IT infrastructure that can be tapped into anytime, from anywhere, securely over the Internet. The system is always available. Despite the 2000+ kilometer distance between Natural Life's warehouse facility in Jacksonville, Florida and the application server in Montreal, Canada, response time is transparent to users serving up top-tier warehouse management capabilities in sub-seconds, and without the need to attend to technology—hardware or software.

Benefits

With TECSYS' WMS, Natural Life is now able to:

- Get significantly more products out the door every day and support their 30% increase in sales
- Improve inventory accuracy and maximize warehouse space utilization
- Drive new process improvement initiatives in the warehouse and in distribution activities
- Sustain high fill rates and significantly improve service to customers
- Win large B2B customers

"I love that the warehouse is automated. We have had record-setting order days, and the warehouse was not only able to keep up but also reduced our turnaround time. TECSYS WMS is a key part of our ability to deliver awesome customer experiences."

***Patti Hughes, Founder & CEO
Natural Life Inc.***



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