

Baker & Taylor, Inc.



About the company.

Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, Baker & Taylor, Inc. is a global information and entertainment services company that distributes books, videos, music, games, and services to libraries, educational institutions, and retailers. The company has been in business for over 180 years and has developed long-term relationships with major suppliers, including book publishers, movie studios, and music labels, shipping more than 1 million unique stock-keeping units annually.

Baker & Taylor is the single supply source of US book needs for international customers, including libraries, retailers, wholesalers, and a variety of other international partners.

For more information about Baker & Taylor, visit www.btol.com.

“ Infor PM has made us confident in our decisions. ”

ROB MCCLOSKEY, DIRECTOR,
FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND REPORTING,
BAKER & TAYLOR, INC.

INFOR™

Setting the strategy.

Several years ago, Baker & Taylor purchased web-based performance management (PM) software from Infor™ to empower decision-makers by making information available anywhere, anytime. Having achieved that goal by applying Infor PM to key functional areas, Baker & Taylor looks to the future to continue streamlining its operations and increasing profits.

When Baker & Taylor first implemented Infor PM, the application served as a management reporting and analysis system for the entire enterprise. General ledger and sales information resided in one place to provide managers immediate access to a common database and one set of numbers that linked detailed sales data with financial information. “We moved from a problematic spreadsheet-based budgeting system to an integrated one that we developed and refined over the years,” says Rob McCloskey, director, financial system and reporting. “Then we added more than sales and general ledger data.

We now generate a sales budget, which we flow into an inventory budget, and in turn flow that into a warehouse budget or operations budget. We actually track from beginning to end what we’re going to sell, how that affects our inventory, and how that affects our warehouses.” Baker & Taylor defines its budget process according to customer market segments, with a sales team being responsible for each slice. The company’s two markets include institutional and retail business, which require different budgeting approaches. “We model these two types in a completely different way so we can determine how many pieces are needed from an inventory or operations perspective,” says McCloskey. “The inventory side of budgeting is complex, but with Infor PM, we’re able to get a customer slice definition, which is critical in deciding what follows.”

Baker & Taylor’s inventory deals with two sets of numbers that must be determined: the number of items that will sell, and the number of items that will not sell. “We do a series of intense calculations, and we’ve even changed the budgeting module, which is flexible and allows us to keep improving our process,” says McCloskey. “We’ve also added forecasts to the system so that the large-scale data projects that were once done in a spreadsheet model are now integrated in the Infor application. The process is much easier and gives us faster, more accurate results.”

facts at a glance:

> company	Baker & Taylor, Inc.
> solution	Infor PM
> industry	Distribution
> country	USA

Getting business specific.

As a result of several mergers and acquisitions involving Baker & Taylor, a change in philosophy occurred in the way the business is run. “We’ve become more fast-paced and aggressive, and our sales expectations increase every year,” says McCloskey. “We now integrate actual, budget, and forecast data in one application, allowing us to perform side-by-side comparisons of our data. Using Infor’s solution, we’ve seen a significant improvement in our processes.”

Even where acquired companies have not been fully integrated with Baker & Taylor, McCloskey reports that his company uses a model built specifically for that type of transaction. “General ledger data on a company comes in, and it flows seamlessly into Infor PM, becoming part of the entire P&L and balance sheet package. We have much greater control because we can then slice and dice the data, drill down to a detailed level for better visibility, and even do monthly variance reporting.”

Seeing results.

When Baker & Taylor first implemented the Infor system, maintaining the application was a two-person job. Since then, the complexity of the work being done using Infor PM has increased dramatically. “We’ve added forecasting and changed the way we do reporting of actual numbers, but we haven’t increased our headcount,” says McCloskey.

“That speaks to the software’s ease of use.” Baker & Taylor also gained added value through the Infor application’s open architecture. “We were able to leverage our Microsoft® SQL Server™ database to minimize costs and maximize our efficiency quickly. Now we can easily drill down to the detailed data instead of asking accounting staff to do a time-consuming manual report—a logistical nightmare. Our user base also better understands the underlying numbers and can do simple analysis, leaving more time for the financial experts to focus on more complicated analytics.”

Application flexibility has also been an important factor in the continued success at Baker & Taylor. “We can see the actual and budgeted numbers through a certain period, then look at the last forecast,” says McCloskey. “By displaying all that information, we can easily compare and make a new forecast.”

Doing business better.

Plans to extend the use of Infor PM are in the works at Baker & Taylor. “We plan to create another level of detail that will be available to those who need it, especially for inventory or operations budgeting, which will make the process even more efficient,” says McCloskey. “We will also implement the workflow function through production reporting, which will help us during variance reporting of operations expenses. Our goal is to get all our data in one place, add more detail, and keep refining our process. Infor PM has made us confident in our decisions.”

About Infor.

Infor acquires and develops functionally rich software backed by thousands of domain experts and then makes it better through continuous innovation, faster implementation options, global enablement, and flexible buying options. In a few short years, Infor has become one

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of the largest providers of business software in the world.
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