

BUTLER BROS. INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIERS

TURNING IT INVESTMENT INTO STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE A large-scale industrial supplier closes wide security gaps in IT infrastructure, positions for growth



Highlights

- Deep expertise and understanding of Butler Brothers' unique challenges
- Minimal interruption to operations and zero down-time
- Reduction of equipment and alignment to business protocols

Project Goals

- Close immediate security gaps in IT infrastructure
- Develop a strategic IT action plan
- Align recommended solutions to the company's business objectives and growth plan to create a scalable IT environment

The Challenge

Butler Brothers is a 2nd generation, family-owned wholesale distribution business specializing in industrial supplies, packaging products and machinery, safety, janitorial and sanitation products.

Butler Brothers has witnessed and adapted to a wildly changing business environment during its 60 years of operation, incorporating new technology to keep pace and leverage efficiencies. Common to small and family-operated businesses, Butler Brothers' focused on quality and production while the adoption of new software solutions and hardware took on more of an organic evolution to meet the company's immediate needs, with no guiding long-term vision.

Over time, the challenges of shifting to software-based operations for accounting and order fulfillment required full-time attention. Pauline Cote, the company's Operations Manager, brought in dedicated IT personnel, including Andrea Crowell, to handle Butler Brothers' expanding technology infrastructure and the company's growing footprint.

In 2013, personnel turnover led to a loss of extensive institutional knowledge and it fell to Crowell and Cote to assess the company's IT infrastructure. During their initial internal audit, Crowell and Cote found a number of what turned out to be critical gaps in the company's IT environment. From expired warranties and obsolete applications to incorrectly installed software and hardware, Butler Brothers was unprepared for technology threats to business-critical operations.

“We have moved beyond responding to immediate threats and are creating capacity for future growth with more efficient use of our technology and with SymQuest's support.”

Pauline Cote, Operations Manager, Butler Brothers

Why SymQuest?

Butler Brothers reached out to SymQuest to provide a quality technology assessment of their business. SymQuest also provided the expertise and responsiveness needed to address the extent of the security gaps in their systems and to suggest a strategic plan. Though Cote and Crowell looked only as far as SymQuest, they were impressed by the company's approach to information technology as a strategic asset that could help Butler Brothers realize long-term business goals.

“SymQuest spoke to us in our language,” commented Cote. “They offered the right kind of support at the right time, making it easy for us to work together. We've only become more collaborative as we've developed our relationship.”

Customer Profile

COMPANY

Butler Brothers

FOUNDED

1952

INDUSTRY / SIZE

Manufacturing

4 branches, 90 employees

LOCATION

Lewiston, Maine

PROJECT TYPE

Network and Document

PRODUCTS USED

SafetyNet

Managed Print Services (MPS)

OVERVIEW

Butler Brothers is a 2nd generation, family-owned wholesale distribution business specializing in industrial supplies, packaging products and machinery, safety, janitorial and sanitation products. Since 1952, the company has grown to 90 employees across four branches and an additional 12 “vendor-managed” sites where Butler Brothers personnel is embedded at the client company.

The Process

"SymQuest's engineers worked with us to conduct a full audit of our entire information technology picture," said Crowell, "examining all of the hardware and software currently in place company-wide and creating a priority list of issues to work from."

SymQuest worked first to update existing hardware, software and warranties to ensure immediate continuance of operations and reduce Butler Brothers' security exposure. While working through first-phase priorities, SymQuest also recommended the creation of a scalable environment to align with the company's growth plans.

Cote reports that in working with SymQuest engineers on the priority lists, interruptions to their operations were minimal and SymQuest personnel were "amazingly responsive and helpful."

Outcomes

Now that initial installation is complete and focus has shifted from critical response to a collaborative partnership, Butler Brothers and SymQuest are working to create capacity, planning for upgrades and new technology installations, and developing strategies to position the company to add new locations.

"Given the fast-changing technology landscape and the financial risk, Butler Brothers ownership historically made all decisions regarding IT purchasing and upgrades," said Cote. "Now with SymQuest as our Managed Service Provider, we are enjoying a new level of autonomy as this process has demonstrated the need for strategic IT investment and has helped give us a voice and build our credibility..."

Butler Brothers is now protected by current warranties and technical support on all hardware and software. The company has moved beyond responding to immediate threats and is creating capacity for future growth with more efficient use of its technology and protecting itself by putting in place contingency and disaster recovery plans.

In addition to the success of the network installation, Butler Brothers worked with SymQuest to address waste and inefficiencies with their print and document solutions. By reducing the number of multi-function printers and positioning them strategically throughout each location, Butler Brothers has better utilization of its current assets.

A View to the Future

As Butler Brothers continues to work with SymQuest, Cote reports a feeling of safety, knowing that their technology solutions are appropriate to the company's size and in having access to knowledge, expertise, personnel and support for anything the company faces.

Based on the partnership's success, Butler Brothers is looking to invest in expanding their solutions to include cloud solutions to further leverage technology savings and flexibility as the company grows.