



Customer Profile

Red Wing Shoe stays competitive with Infor M3



Facts at a glance

Product: Infor M3

Industry: Fashion/Sportswear & Sporting Goods

Country: USA

"We are committed to our customers and passionate about our products. That's why we partner with Infor."

**—Joe Topinka, CIO,
Red Wing Shoe**

About the company

For more than 100 years, Minnesota-based Red Wing Shoe Company has been crafting purpose-built work footwear for specific jobs. From the factory floor to the construction site, from refineries to railroads, on oil rigs and docks, today's modern craftsmen trust Red Wing to deliver premium quality work boots and shoes with the features, fit, and service required for their demanding jobs.

It all starts with a piece of leather produced at Red Wing's own tannery, the S. B Foot Tanning Company. From the beginning, Red Wing Shoe Company has produced all of the leather used in its footwear at this tannery - now one of the oldest, largest, and last remaining tanneries in the United States.

Today, Red Wing has three factories in the U.S. and builds more than 1.2 million pairs of shoes annually. Its footwear is sold to distributors and retail stores worldwide. For more information, visit www.redwingshoes.com.

Setting the strategy

Since 1905, Red Wing Shoe Company has helped keep working people on their feet. With such a rich heritage and history, the company could have relied on its successes and reputation to keep it moving forward. But Red Wing leaders understood the need to utilize the latest technology and business practices in order to stay competitive and continue growing.

So when Red Wing made the decision to upgrade to the latest Infor™ technology, Infor M3, it was eager to take advantage of the new capabilities and also to continue enjoying 24x7 technical support as a Silver Maintenance Program customer.

"We are committed to our customers and passionate about our products," says Red Wing CIO Joe Topinka. "That's why we partner with Infor."

"We appreciate the investments Infor has made because it makes our lives easier," he adds.

Getting business specific

Despite some aggressive courting by third party vendors, Red Wing went with Infor Professional Services for the implementation.

"Surprisingly, many third party consultants knocked on our door when they found out we were upgrading. But, quite honestly, it was a fairly easy choice for us to go with Infor Professional Services because it's their product and they're our partner," says Topinka.

"And we like the fact that Infor has 'skin in the game,' which is a little different than a third party vendor that doesn't necessarily live with the product."

"We also discovered that a lot of third parties claim to have expertise and knowledge of the platform, but that turned out to be only somewhat true. They typically had experience with older versions but not the new one."

"We're all about mitigating risk, so we went with Infor," says Topinka.

Seeing results

Since several years had passed since the company's last software update, tuning and pre-migrating data was especially important to Red Wing. "We hadn't upgraded in six years, so archiving was the first order of business for us," says Topinka. "We hadn't archived at all since the original conversion, so we had 1.5 terabytes of data-obviously a large migration."

The company got rid of old data and moved over the rest during a long holiday weekend. With a large production database, runtime was key to Red Wing. Infor's migration team specialists were involved from the start, and by tuning and pre-migrating data, reduced runtime by more than half so the go-live migration of approximately 800gb of data took only 23 hours—allowing plenty of time for Red Wing's users to complete all migration activities that weekend.

"It was a significant effort, but everything went smoothly," says Topinka. "There were very few problems, if any. This was a big milestone for us."

Smart Office, which is designed to help users create a more effective and efficient user environment on their desktop, is another tool Red Wing had been eyeing for some time. "We're impressed by the user productivity, the natural integration of Microsoft, the Microsoft platform, getting information and alerts in your inbox," says Topinka. "It's the way people work, so it just feels like a nice, natural integration."



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Doing business better

Because the company has hired more than 100 people in the last six months and plans to continue aggressive hiring, anything that can help with the process of bringing new people on board is also of great interest.

"We're now looking at creative staffing solutions, so ease of use in getting new employees up to speed is paramount in our minds," says Topinka. "The new platform enables us to provide better training and is actually a morale boost for our employees."

He also says that Red Wing plans to explore mobility options once Infor M3 is fully up and running, "Right now we've got about two years worth of features and functions we'd like to deploy and we're working on getting our business processes in order, but looking ahead we are interested in mobile applications," he comments.

"The first bit of advice I would give anyone considering an upgrade to Infor M3 is not to wait as long as we did," he adds. "Now that it's a part of our roadmap, we're proactively thinking about how to take advantage of new capabilities as soon as they're announced."