



Bermuda Electric Company: An Inventory of Teamwork

At Zerion, we believe that when you work as a team, you can conquer all. We proved that when we partnered with a distributor to do a physical inventory at an electric utility company. We faced an organization that had 104 years in business without a completely successful inventory; 14,000 SKUs totaling \$30 million; 4,000 duplicates; lots of write-ins; and, material in complete disarray throughout two facilities.

OVERVIEW

Company: BELCO

Location: Hamilton, Bermuda

In Business Since: 1906

Industry: Electric utilities

Project Type: Inventory

Goals: To do what no one else had done or thought possible ... accurately complete an inventory

Challenges: Two unorganized warehouses that hadn't been counted in 104 years

Takeaway: When people come together as a team, they can overcome any challenge.

"We were able to do something no one thought we could."

**Harry Irwin,
CFO at ESOT**

SUCCESS STORY

When people hop a plane to the tropical, historic British island of Bermuda, typically it's for sun, fun and relaxation. But, that's not what Zerion had in mind on their recent Bermudian jaunt. They were teamed up with distributor and client Electric Supply of Tampa (ESOT) to perform a full physical inventory for an electric utility company.

The Bermuda Electric Company (BELCO) has been the island's sole utility for 104 years. During that time, multiple attempts had been made to accurately count the utility's 14,000 SKUs totaling \$30 million. However, none of them had been considered a complete success. Their most recent effort lasted 3 or 4 days, counting only 3,000 items.

Without a firm understanding of what was in stock in their

warehouse, or exactly where products were stored, BELCO often was ordering product they didn't need. They also were operating inefficiently, thinking they had to wait for product to come in, when it already may have been in their warehouse. And, they were wasting a great deal of time searching for items.

As their supplier of electrical products for the last 10 years, ESOT experienced these challenges first-hand. ESOT has had great success with their own inventory process, which relies on the tools available in their Epicor Eclipse software. Even though they knew there would be overwhelming challenges to completing an inventory for BELCO, they believed they could apply their success to their Bermudian friends. So, they approached them with the idea of doing an inventory.

Customer Success Story

BELCO has a great deal of trust in their relationship with ESOT and decided to let them try. ESOT brought in Zerion, their distribution and Eclipse consultant, to assist with the process, and to help manage the project. Zerion's vast Eclipse knowledge and distribution expertise would be an invaluable asset to the well-rounded team. In addition, their experience in motivating people to come together and complete projects like this would be essential.

"It really helped that we had Eclipse because we know that inventory process," said Harry Irwin, ESOT's chief financial officer. "We know that it works; and, it's worked for us for such a long time. Being able to use that as our starting point really made it happen."

Along with several Zerion consultants, ESOT employed their best warehouse worker, driver and salesperson for the weeklong project. They arrived on-site with a clear goal in mind; but, quickly realized that a great deal of hard labor and uncompromised teamwork would be the only way to follow through with their commitment to success.

Ralph Kluesner, ESOT's international sales manager noted, "When Tony and I first visited BELCO, we knew it would be challenging, but not to the degree it turned out to be."



Ray Mohammed from ESOT added, "We were there to do a job; and, whatever it took, we were going to get it done. Failure was not an option."

That became their motto. The team and its drive to do what no one else had done before became an immediate success story, even though they faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. For example, 4,000 items had duplicates with no activity since the 1990s. There was an abnormally high number of write-ins that had to be identified. And, they had an unusually large amount of material, which was in complete disarray throughout two different facilities.



Harry said, "I know a couple of times we all questioned whether we would get done in time; but, we just kept plugging along. When someone got down, we picked that person back up. It was a total team effort."

Tony King, Zerion's owner and lead consultant, agreed that teamwork was the name of the game. He said, "We worked as a unit and there were never any disagreements. Everyone had their own individual roles and stayed on task, working hard and fast."

In the end, the team's efforts paid off. After five 12-hour, non-stop

days in far from ideal conditions, the inventory was completed. Zerion and ESOT left the warehouse clean and organized with every piece of material accounted for. The long list of items that were not fit to be put in the system were thrown away. The 4,000 duplicate products were deleted. And, BELCO has a helpful list of tasks to perform to continue enhancing efficiency.

"I was stunned to see the numbers at week's end," said Tony. "I feared we could be off by 10% due to the circumstances; but, we came within less than 1%!"

Ralph added, "What we were able to accomplish says a lot for the on-site team, our MIS department, and the BELCO staff. Everyone put forth 110% to complete what many thought was impossible."

The team was incredibly proud of their perseverance and their ability to help a customer in need. "I know they [BELCO] are extremely pleased with how everything went and that they're very happy," remarked Harry.

Daron Brown from Zerion added, "I was proud we were able to help ESOT on such an impactful project. It wasn't about Zerion, but rather an opportunity to make one of our customers look great; and, we did it!"



Customer Success Story