



C&L SUPPLY: WHERE TENURE MEETS TRAINING

A distributor with many long-term employees was facing a major operational change: moving to an RF warehouse. Change is hard for anyone; but, when you've been accustomed to the same procedures for over 25 years, it can seem insurmountable. C&L needed a partner for training who not only knew their stuff, but also had the gift of teaching.

OVERVIEW

Company: C&L Supply, Inc.

Headquarters: Vinita, OK

Locations: 8, spread throughout OK, MO, AR, TN, LA

In Business Since: 1954

Industry: Wholesale distribution and retail

Products: Plumbing, HVAC, Appliances, Electronics, Furniture, Seasonal products

Employees: 100

Project Type: Install / Training

Product: Eclipse Wireless Warehouse

Goals: To complete the install on a tight, rigid timetable and to reduce pull errors after implementation

Challenges: Many long-term employees who would need to embrace change; a full physical inventory scheduled immediately after go-live

Takeaway: Old dogs can learn new tricks, and even learn to love them, if given proper training

“We were looking for someone who was going to be there after the training. Today, even if I need to ask just one question I can email Tony and he'll respond. He stands behind the install. Anytime we need any other implementation, we will always look to Zerion first.”

**Marilyn Wilson,
Operations Manager**

SUCCESS STORY

C&L Supply was started by the Curnutte family in Oklahoma to meet the supply needs of local plumbing and HVAC contractors. The focus on family translated to both employees and customers, as they developed long-lasting relationships with both. 55 years later, the focus hasn't changed. Now managed by the third generation of family, C&L has 13 employees who have been with the company for over 25 years. They also have 29 more who have been with the company over 10 years. That's an impressive kind of longevity; and, they attribute their growth to it. Success aside, C&L felt they could do better.

Customer Success Story

They started on the road to improvement by implementing Activant Eclipse software in 2005. By 2008, they were ready to take the next step they'd been waiting for all along: implementation of an RF warehouse, starting with their headquarters. Like most paper warehouses, C&L experienced a level of pull errors that was unsatisfactory for them. They felt service to their loyal customer base was lacking and their bottom line was suffering.

“When you're in a remote area and you make a mistake with a customer, it can be costly if you have to run a truck. Besides customer service, you've lost time and a vehicle.”

Six months prior to go-live, C&L had started laying out the warehouse while still unsure who was going to manage the project or provide training. During their 2005 Eclipse implementation, their staff didn't feel adequately trained. They felt the approach to training was over their head, and they had to figure a lot of things out on their own after the project was complete. Accustomed to the same types of procedures for many years, RF would be a major change and C&L's long-standing team would require the right kind of training from the right people.

In preparation for the RF install, some of the company's leaders attended an Eclipse Users Group training class on RF. Zerion's Tony King was teach-

ing; and, after listening to him that day, C&L knew they had their answer.

“A lot of our success stories are about finding the right personality fit and this was it. Whenever you asked a question, he knew the answer or he could get you the answer. We knew our people would really respond to him.”

Just a short time later, Zerion's staff was dispatched to C&L. A big task before them was motivating C&L employees to embrace the install. Even though Marilyn knew her team would do great, she was pleasantly surprised at how well they took to the change. She said, “Even if employees are afraid of change, if you motivate them and you push them, they will embrace it. The positive attitude of both C&L's owners and the Zerion team was contagious. We learned that, no matter what, we have a team that can do anything we ask of them. Having Zerion in the warehouse a lot of hours right beside them made a lot of difference.”

“The training was excellent. Before they walked away, they made sure our employees understood; and, if someone needed extra help, they got it. There was a lot of one-on-one and I think that was a real factor in the success. The success has a lot to do with Zerion.”

The operations manager believes that Zerion's hands-on,

real-world approach helped her team understand and walk away confident in their new abilities. “Training was done in a way that everyone could understand; and, if they didn't, Zerion spent time one-on-one. It started at a basic level and moved forward at a pace that everyone could keep up with.”

Now, C&L's customers are experiencing dramatically improved pull rates; and, the company's owners feel more secure with their inventory. “We can walk straight to the location to find product and know that it's there. The time that our warehouse people spend looking for items is drastically improved,” said Marilyn. She added, “One of our largest customers is 40 minutes away and we deliver a truckload to him every day. His order had pull errors every day, so he would sit and check off the product at delivery. The RF install resulted in his correct up rate going up by 90%.”

The implementation was completed successfully, and in time for their physical inventory. The positive outcome has helped them look forward to the next RF install.

“Our high expectations were totally met. We were very happy with the whole procedure. We had to have it done by physical and they came in and trained quickly and efficiently on the timetable that we gave them. They stayed extra time to make sure everyone was up and running after go live.”

Customer Success Story