All Type Electric Uses Spectrum Implementation as Opportunity to Simplify Processes, Lay North American Growth Foundation

When The Coles Bay Group LLC acquired Edmonton, Alberta-based All Type Electric in 2013, it knew it was tapping into a significant growth potential. All Type Electric, a specialized electrical contractor and equipment fabricator had built a solid foundation of clients throughout Alberta since it was founded in 1981. After a carefully-executed two year transition at All Type Electric, Coles Bay added other niche electrical contractors in Los Angeles, California and Calgary, Alberta. Both companies went immediately onto Spectrum.

The Coles Bay Group knew from the outset it would need a single-solution enterprise resource planning (ERP) software system to tie the companies' business, construction and service management operations together onto one platform.

"There was a recognition first and foremost that All Type Electric was operating in a lot of different silos internally. We had a multitude of systems that were all different and the data didn't talk to each other across departments or divisions. It created a lot of trouble in that there was often triple and even quadruple entry of data. That is not a sustainable position to be in for a growing company," said Michael Brown, Managing Principal of The Coles Bay Group. "We doubled the size of the company in one year. So as we doubled, the paperwork quadrupled. With the ownership change, the goal was to build a larger organization and we knew we needed some sort of ERP system in order to manage the growth in the right ways."

Finding a complete, multi-company solution

Brown said that when they went to the market looking at software, there were specific needs—one unified system, handling multi-company operations, and browser-based technology with mobile solutions for technicians in the field. Spectrum, Brown said, stood out in all of those categories.

"A key reason we chose Dexter + Chaney was the multi-company enterprise capability, which is very strong in Spectrum," he said. "We knew we were going to be a multi-company operation. We needed the system we chose to work both in Canada and the United States.

A web-based solution that allowed users to work in real time even when in remote locations was critical as well. "The fact that Dexter + Chaney has led on developing software in the cloud, and already has the learning curve behind them was a big plus. Having the Field Tech mobile piece (for service management and work orders in the field) was huge. Very few companies have that remote working capability with iPads yet—most companies don't, or if they do, they're using third parties to do it. Spectrum was the only one we saw that had all of the features and functionality together in one package."

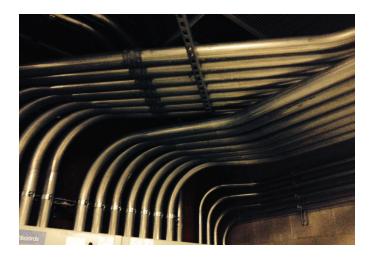### Simplifying implementation processes, maximizing opportunities

Of course, changing out the core systems and solutions that run the day-to-day operations of the business is never a thrilling prospect—even if it means improving them for the long term. The implementation process for business management software can take time and cause delays if not handled properly. This concept was certainly not lost on Brown.

"Implementation is a huge hurdle with any significant software purchase and we needed to be sure before going in that we'd be going into the right situation," Brown said. "We performed a very thorough research and selection process when we were looking at new software packages. We started with 10 different software companies. By the time we ended up choosing Spectrum, we had spoken with and vetted Dexter + Chaney quite extensively. We spoke with a number of Dexter + Chaney's clients. After speaking with them, we felt very confident in our decision."

Once implementation began, Brown said All Type and The Coles Bay Group worked very closely with two very strong project managers—Al Olson and Kirk McClaren. "We took the opportunity to really take a step back and essentially redesign, simplify and improve our financial reporting as a whole, and of various business lines. We were using the enterprise module so we had the ability to utilize cost centers. One thing that was really important to us because we are such a resource con-

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strained organization, was that we wanted to really simplify the implementation."

Dexter + Chaney's implementation team, Brown said, did just that: "Right from the start, Al and Kirk worked with us, and our accounting firm, to give us a system and process that better reflected our business model. One of the things that I always appreciated with Al and Kirk was that if you had a question for them, they wanted to know what we were looking to achieve. They wanted to understand our end goal and help us find the best way to get us there."

Brown said the core of the implementation process took approximately two months—significantly less than the typical six-month or longer he had heard about from peers with other ERP implementations. "One of our peer companies we were talking to had an absolute disaster with another software vendor's implementation—to the point where they actually had to go back and re-implement it several months later," Brown said. "That's what we wanted to avoid and that is what Spectrum and the Dexter + Chaney team helped us avoid."

The result?

So now that Spectrum is in place and All Type Electric's businesses are up and running, how does Brown feel about his company's decision to purchase Spectrum?

"We feel great about it," he said. "Our processes are much simpler and more transparent and we have a much better feel for the business intelligence behind our companies and projects."

When The Coles Bay Group acquired the Los Angeles-based Multin Electric in the summer of 2015 and rolled it into the company, it was able to handle its implementation of and training on Spectrum in house, thanks to the time and dedication that Dexter + Chaney's project managers took during the initial implementation. "We were comfortable enough to be able to bring (Multin) on board ourselves because we were well-trained and given the tools we needed from the very beginning."

And as for that multiple-company, mobile operation business model that Brown and his team sought when looking for new software?

"Just this past summer, I reviewed draw requests from 35,000 feet in the air on WiFi on a flight to China over Siberia," Brown said. "Spectrum allows us to be flexible and travel with our data at our fingertips wherever we are. That's powerful."