

## Success Story

### The Company

#### Premier Lighting, Inc.

- Distributor of Commercial Lighting Products
- St. Paul, Minnesota
- [www.premierltg.com](http://www.premierltg.com)

### The Problem

History look-up process caused system user frustration and customer service delays, prompting Premier Lighting to consider moving to another system.

### The Solution

BASM created a custom lookup tool, using SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS), which allows Premier Lighting to simultaneously use the system while providing immediate access to customer history.

### The Results

The SSRS tool streamlined the history look-up process, eliminating user frustration, and providing faster customer service.

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Since 1991 Premier Lighting, Inc. has been a leading supplier of commercial grade lighting products including: bulbs, ballasts, fixtures, lenses, recycling and energy systems. The company prides itself on offering the best products at the best price and having a full-service technical support staff ready to assist customers with all their lighting questions. However, their current software presented challenges as Premier Lighting's customer orders require them to view the historical purchases for almost every order.

### A Dim Problem Causes User Frustration

"When customers call in re-orders, they often don't know the exact description or code for the product. They will start by describing a product and then say "Well, you know, just like the ones we got last time". In lighting there can be many variables for the same product. The wattage may be what the customer knows and is asking for but they may not know the Kelvin temperature" stated Angie Koch, CEO of Premier Lighting. "The customers expected that we would be able to know what they wanted, including the price they paid for it, by the brief description they provided. With thousands of lighting products to choose from, many of which are similar – like light bulbs – this requires a search of the customers' history with multiple screen look-ups. In many cases, we could quickly access their history only to have them ask about a new item which would require a different screen to allow us to price the newly requested item. In lighting, pricing is driven individually by customer volume and industry making pricing difficult. This frequently resulted in us needing to close what we were working on when they called and switch to another part of the system. This was a frustrating, inefficient process for us that also caused delays in completing orders with customers. It may have only taken a minute or two, but that is a minute or two too long with such a high call volume."

This time consuming and cumbersome disruption of workflow caused Premier Lighting to approach their long term automation partner, Business Automation Specialists of Minnesota (BASM), for a solution. "Angie came to us wanting to completely change systems because of this issue," recalls Ryan Ketterling, Senior Sales Consultant of BASM, "However, after my discussion with Angie, there really weren't any other business reasons to justify the cost of such a drastic change."

### SQL Server Reporting Tool Illuminates a New Way

The solution BASM presented was to implement SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS), a server-based report generation software system from Microsoft. SSRS can be used to prepare and deliver a variety of interactive and printed reports. It is



## Experience

Business Automation Specialists leverages 25 years of practical business experience with software technology to help mid-sized manufacturers and distributors capitalize on their unique business strengths. We've built our business by helping our clients build theirs; enabling them to become better, faster and stronger through improved management controls, cash flow and profitability.

## Performance

We focus the creative energies of business and personnel on the critical issues necessary for success by identifying time, information and communication loss. We utilize creative problem solving to structure and refine processes for optimum performance.

## Knowledge

We provide the synergy of business professionals, industry knowledge, research and business acumen to produce consistent implementation and use of new and existing resources.

## Results

We only provide services and products to our clients that will offer a return on their investment. If you are interested in results like those outlined in this Success Study, we invite you to contact us today.

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administered via a web interface and features services to support the development of custom reporting applications. BASM programmers were able to use a free version of the SQL report writing tool to pull data from Premier Lighting's non-SQL database.

"BASM was able to get this written and implemented for us in less than two weeks," stated Angie. Using multiple monitors, Premier Lighting keeps their accounting system on one screen, and the SQL reporting tool open on the other. Now, when a customer calls and needs information, they can search for the information they need in one click with the SSRS tool and drill down for details as needed; without closing their current work. Additionally, Premier Lighting can answer questions on new products that may not be part of the history without having to switch from customer history over to products. The history remains on one screen and now the other screen is available to suggest and explore new products for the customer.

## A Bright Idea Gets Better Results

According to Angie, "Not only has the SSRS tool streamlined the customer re-order process, but there were unexpected benefits too. Now that all of our historical data is on the SSRS database, we no longer need to worry about being tied to a specific software product. If in the future we decide to make a change, we can do so without losing this 'business critical' information or having to pay to have it converted. Additionally, we use the reporting tool to help with cash receipts. It can look up by invoice number versus needing the "bill to" information in the software system. This saves time when clients send checks from parent companies that aren't in our system."

In addition to historical look-up, the tool has been extremely helpful in training new employees. When training with the old system, we would direct a new employee to gather all the information a customer would give them; then we would research the customer history file to manually write up the new order. The next step would be to enter the order into the system as a sales order. Now, with the SSRS tool, we open the history on one screen and enter the order directly into the system on the other monitor. It allows the training of order entry to flow more efficiently.

Should Premier Lighting choose to in the future, their SSRS data could be published externally to allow remote access. This could allow sales people to view it from the road, or even customers with special login credentials to see their specific order history.

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