

Tampa Tile



About the company.

Tampa Tile is a family owned and operated distributor of ceramic tile and related products. Founded in 1953 by Domenic DiFabrizio as Tampa Tile & Terrazzo, the company started as a subcontractor for ceramic tile and terrazzo and remained one of the Tampa Bay area's largest until 1983 when it changed its business model to focus primarily on wholesale distribution.

The company serves the Tampa Bay, Florida, region and beyond from two locations. Its 30 employees process more than 2,200 orders per month and sell more than 2.5 million square feet of imported and domestic porcelain and ceramic tile each year.

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JOHN HAYFORD, GENERAL MANAGER,
TAMPA TILE

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Setting the strategy.

Maintaining profitability was a major challenge for Tampa Tile because of the complexities of providing the construction industry with long-lead products, many of which must be imported from Europe and South America.

“Being able to preserve profit margin on imported products was a huge challenge for us,” says John Hayford, general manager, Tampa Tile, citing a combination of factors on both the supply side and customer side. “Imported products get handled a lot as they go from one port to another, and there are many chances for breakage,” he explains. In addition to this risk of damage, Tampa Tile also had to make sure that its orders were accurately understood by suppliers in other countries where English was not the primary language.

On the customer side, there was little margin for error. “We work with large contractors, doing complex jobs,” Hayford says. “If the order comes in wrong, it can take a month to get a replacement. This kind of delay can be very costly to our customers.”

Against this backdrop of business challenges, Tampa Tile was using a legacy enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that was no longer meeting its needs. “One of the problems with the old system was in the availability of information and the lack of consistency from module to module,” Hayford explains. “The information wasn’t getting to the people who need it.”

“It was important to have a new solution that could give our employees the accurate, timely information they need to manage orders and keep the proper inventory,” he says.

Getting business specific.

To address its business challenges, Tampa Tile upgraded its enterprise system to Infor™ ERP SX.enterprise following a careful evaluation of several products. “As part of the evaluation, we broke up the company into teams based on job responsibilities,” he explains. “The Infor team briefed our individual teams on how the Infor ERP SX.enterprise solution could support our sales orders, accounting, receivables, and other business processes. The clear consensus among our employees was that the Infor solution offered the best ease of use.”

facts at a glance:

> company	Tampa Tile
> solution	Infor ERP
> product	SX.enterprise
> platform	IBM® AIX®/Microsoft® Windows®
> database	Progress®
> industry	Distribution & Retail
> employees	30
> country	USA

Hayford says that one of the modules that stood out from the competition was the event management capability. “This was important to us because it supports our management-by-exception approach,” he says.

“The Infor solution was an excellent choice for us,” Hayford says. “Even though Infor ERP SX.enterprise is a world-class solution capable of powering some of the most complex distribution environments in the world, it offered the functionality we needed to solve our very specific business problems.”

The Infor team worked closely with Tampa Tile to maintain an aggressive implementation schedule. “We are a small company, and moving to the new Infor system was a huge cultural change for us,” Hayford says. “There were a lot of things we had to get done in a short period of time and the Infor team really helped pull us across the finish line and get us up and running.”

Hayford says the ease of use of Infor ERP SX.enterprise also contributed to a successful implementation. “We’ve hired several people since the implementation and they have taken right to it,” he says. “The fact that people coming in off the street are able to quickly learn the system proves that the Infor ERP SX.enterprise ease of use is a major advantage.”

Seeing results.

Infor ERP SX.enterprise is delivering a wide range of financial and business process benefits to Tampa Tile. "Our revenue has increased by eight percent because of the Infor solution," Hayford says. "Because the system is easy to use and has virtually no down time, our counter people can spend more time concentrating on new sales."

Productivity at Tampa Tile also has improved because the quality of data is much better now that Infor ERP SX.enterprise is in place. "With the new system, the integrity of the data is much better. Employees know they can trust what they are looking at, and this gives our customers more confidence in our decision-making."

For example, Hayford says, "The event manager in Infor ERP SX.enterprise is great for us. I can spot a problem before it is invoiced so we're now more proactive and able to fix problems before they flow through the whole system," he says. This increased visibility is enabling Hayford to more closely monitor the company's financial performance. "I can look at the margins for the entire company at the end of every day," he says, "and that's a great benefit."

The greater insight into inventory and improved communications capabilities has helped Tampa Tile better perform on its special-order business, which represents approximately 15 percent of the company's business. "These are very expensive items that have to be ordered from special vendors," Hayford explains. "In the Infor solution, there is a link between the order and the shipment, so we're now able to make sure special orders get delivered to customers as quickly as possible."

Doing business better.

Tampa Tile is exploring ways to expand its business model to include more online capabilities for its customers. "Most of the younger contractors we work with have laptops and want the ability to place orders online and look at their accounts online," Hayford says. "We believe that implementing the Infor B2B e-commerce product may be the best way for us to deliver this capability."

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The company also is working with Infor to implement bar coding capability within the Tampa Tile warehouse. "You can't sit in the same place or the world will pass you by," Hayford says. "That's why we are looking to change our business model with the help of solutions from Infor."

About Infor.

Infor acquires and develops functionally rich software backed by thousands of domain experts and then makes it better through continuous innovation, faster implementation options, global enablement, and flexible buying options. In a few short years, Infor has become one of the largest providers of business software in the world. For additional information, visit www.infor.com.

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