CASE STUDY: Blue Ridge Painting and Decorating

Accent on Service and Customer Support

Blue Ridge Builders Supply, Charlottesville, Va., has been in business for more than 20 years. Blue Ridge Paint and Decorating, a new branch of the builder supply company, was started by store manager, Debbie Bryning, and four other staff members to offer customers decorating expertise in more than just paint supplies.

The store specializes in providing products that add the finishing touches to homes, such as paint, window treatments, and flooring products, along with offering knowledgeable suggestions for design and “how-to” technical tips.

Blue Ridge Paint and Decorating serves contractors and do-it-yourselfers, and is proud to be a Benjamin Moore Signature store, mixing 2,300 to 2,500 gallons of paint every month.

Growing with automation

“We were a paint corner at Blue Ridge Builders Supply before the decision was made to open the paint and decorating center in response to customer demand for more extensive home design support,” said Bryning. “We needed a store that offered a wide array of products for home builders and homeowners to make it easy to purchase everything needed to execute the entire home design project in one place.”

Because the store prides itself on its ability to assist customers with both design ideas and product selection, it was important to make time for consultation. Bryning, who heads up the design initiative, was instrumental in the company’s decision to automate its paint tinting operation. Previously, all paint had been tinted manually, but the new store opened its doors with an Accutinter 7000 paint mixing system from Fluid Management to meet and exceed customer service expectations and to operate with both accurate and resilient equipment. It was the perfect selection for the store’s small service area, since the AT7000 offers a compact footprint with efficient dispensing capability to keep up with high traffic hours and busy weekends.

“The Accutinter 7000 has brought many benefits to an operation that is very customer-focused,” said Bryning. “It has certainly reduced our mis-tints, but one of the biggest benefits has been that we can input the formula in the computer and the machine does the tinting for us. That gives us more opportunity to work with our customers while the AT7000 is running, or we can even save time by setting up another tint job. For manual tinting, you have to really concentrate, making it difficult to help a customer standing next to you and asking questions or needing help.”

Key drivers in selecting Fluid Management’s Accutinter 7000 included its efficient DVX technology—digital automation that ensures a precise and repeatable tint amount is dispensed every time. The patented DVX pump technology features a swift flow rate that offers faster dispensing. The pump was also designed for internal durability, and allows reduced component wear and a lower cost of ownership.

“Everyone on our staff can use the Accutinter,” noted Bryning. “We haven’t had any problems with our staff members’ learning curve. And we haven’t had any issues with service or maintenance, either. So far, we’ve never had to request a service call. That is huge in a busy operation like ours.”

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The AT7000 was engineered to support a busy decorating environment like Blue Ridge Paint and Decorating. The machine holds up to 16 canisters, and 12 canister frames can be configured with 8 six-quart canisters and 8 four-quart canisters. Operating the AT7000 is faster and easier for users because of a smooth sliding adjustable shelf that accommodates different can heights, and rugged, easy-to-clean stainless steel surfaces. Additionally, store personnel like the fact they can set-up a tinting job using an easy-to-understand menu and the Accutinter does the rest.

When customer service is important
Blue Ridge Paint and Decorating was launched to supply the one-on-one customer service and assistance that can be difficult in a larger, commodity-oriented builder supply businesses. While Blue Ridge Paint and Decorating continues to serve a large number of contractors, almost half of the company’s customer base are homeowners and do-it-yourselfers who seek the knowledgeable and experienced advice of the store’s staff. While consultation takes a little more time, the net result is customer loyalty and repeat sales.

“The choice to move to automation was one of the best choices we have made for this new business,” said Bryning. “It does the job right every time, and better yet, it frees me up to devote more time to our customers.”