

Investing in technology has its rewards

BY ARTHUR BARRETT, PRESIDENT

Up against tough competition, Barrett Distribution Centers is honored to win The Technology User of the Year award.

On October 18th, Barrett Distribution Centers won an award from the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council as *The Technology User of the Year* in Massachusetts. The Council recognizes outstanding performance in 10 categories. Barrett won in the Technology User/Implementer category, going up against some very tough competition from much larger and more recognized companies, including:

- ▶ Dana Farber Cancer Institute
- ▶ EMC Corporation
- ▶ Jordan's Furniture (a Berkshire Hathaway Co.)

▶ Wilson Farms

We won this award based on the successful implementation of our new Warehouse Management System (WMS). Three outcomes from this implementation were the basis of our winning the award:

- ▶ **On-time** implementation
- ▶ Our ability to take on significant **new business opportunities**, with resulting new employment opportunities
- ▶ Efficiencies derived, that help us keep our **costs down**

The project plan entailed a very aggressive time line, with well-defined milestone dates. Our own implementation team and the vendor, Zethcon, worked extremely hard to complete the project on time and within budget.

Most of our employees today were here prior to 2005, when we still worked with a paper-based warehouse management system. In 2005 we made a significant investment in RF (radio frequency) technology and introduced new work methods into our distribution centers with the Synapse WMS. Our employees should be very proud of this recognition and their significant role in winning this prestigious award.

In 2006, the investment in our new system began paying significant dividends, as our ability to meet new and complex customer requirements helped us grow our revenue 25%—and turn a profit that recouped our investment.

Our ISO processes already had us performing at an accuracy level of 99.94%; so improved accuracy was not the motivation for us to implement a new system. Rather, the ability to handle more complex customer requirements

—especially EDI (Electronic Data Interchange); and improved labor efficiencies were the motivators for us to invest in this new technology. We have enjoyed the positive results from both perspectives. We have taken on more business without a corresponding increase in customer service staff, as the receiving and put away is now loaded into the WMS from the RF guns; and customer orders are automatically imported into the order management system via the EDI processes that our IT staff has mapped.

Barrett is clearly recognized by our clients as the leading provider of outsourced logistics services in the Boston market:

—our ability to take on new challenges has resulted in 12 new warehouse jobs in the past year; and

—we invested \$15 million in our newest distribution center in Franklin, MA in November 2006.

We had some stiff competition for this technology award. Just being nominated on the same ballot as these companies is a terrific honor. To win the award was absolutely fantastic. All of our employees worked extremely hard to master the new system, with new techniques and processes. We are especially grateful to **Tom Shiels** and **Russell Eng** of Barrett; and to **Chipper Farley** from Zethcon, for the great job they did in heading up this project. The employees of Barrett deserve a great deal of credit for this recognition. 🚚

For more information about Barrett's investment in IT and infrastructure, please contact Arthur Barrett at abarrett@barrettdistribution.com. For more information about Barrett's service offerings, please contact Tim Barrett at tbarrett@barrettdistribution.com

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