

JDA (RedPrairie) WMS Upgrade Case Study: Subaru of America



“We brought Longbow back to lead our multi-site upgrade project because they have both the technical and the functional expertise that we needed, and we continue to use their services. The performance gains we saw after Longbow tuned our system were impressive.”

- Brian Simmermon
VP & CIO, Subaru of America, Inc.

The Client

Through its worldwide dealer network, Subaru markets and distributes a full range of coupes, sedans, SUVs, crossovers, and wagons.

The company is internationally recognized for its tradition of automotive excellence and innovation—most notably for its advanced symmetrical all wheel drive technology, and for its use of the horizontally opposed “boxer” engine. Subaru customers are known for their enthusiasm for the company’s products and loyalty to the brand.

Subaru of America, Inc. has implemented a series of award-winning environmental initiatives. Their manufacturing plant in Lafayette, IN, has won a number of EPA awards, and was the first in the automotive industry to be designated as a “Backyard Wildlife Habitat” and “ZERO Landfill” site.

The Situation

Subaru of America markets Subaru vehicles, parts, and accessories through its network

of approximately 625 dealerships across the United States.

The dealer network is served by parts warehouses in New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Indiana, Colorado, and Oregon. The warehouses handle a large number of orders per day, and apply a rapid order picking approach. Warehouse efficiency is of critical importance to the company.

As part of an overhaul of its warehouse IT infrastructure, Subaru of America decided to upgrade its JDA, previously RedPrairie, WMS, WFM, and Hub systems.

Subaru of America had a number of goals for its RedPrairie upgrade:

- leverage new features and functionalities
- run systems that were easier and less costly to maintain
- streamline the managerial process for order fulfillment
- Improve WFM accuracy to a minimum of 98 percent
- Improve overall warehouse efficiency

Longbow had implemented the original RedPrairie systems for Subaru of America, and was brought in to perform the upgrades.

The Challenges

This was a multi-site upgrade project that presented a number of technical and functional challenges:

1. Subaru of America's WMS and WFM were different versions, residing on separate servers. Both systems had to be upgraded in tandem and combined onto a single server
2. Hub, RedPrairie's integration middleware, had to be upgraded and integrated with Subaru of America's host ERP system, which was itself being upgraded at the time
3. All six warehouses were part of the project—in the case of Oregon, the upgrade was to be installed in a brand new facility that had no pre-existing WMS or WFM configuration
4. Because the sites were to be rolled out one by one, data for each individual site had to be isolated and migrated from a common server without compromising data for any of the other locations

Longbow drew upon its technical expertise, knowledge of RedPrairie products, and experience in supply chain upgrades to manage every aspect of the project.

The Results

Successful completion of six warehouse upgrades in less than 18 months

Longbow's extensive knowledge of RedPrairie's data manipulation, table structures, and background processes was critical to the success of the project.

For every warehouse, Longbow developed a highly complex, custom script to capture all transactional data, SKUs, inventory, and warehouse information for migration to the upgraded WMS. Each script completed the information transfer within 15 hours, while maintaining the integrity of the data for all other warehouse locations.

Subaru had decided to relocate the Oregon warehouse to a new and larger facility, and wanted the upgraded RedPrairie software installed at the new location.

Longbow worked closely with Subaru's WMS administrator to map the warehouse, and determine all racking setups and warehouse configurations in preparation for the upgrade.

Longbow upgraded Subaru's WMS to version 10.2, and integrated it with company's host Oracle ERP system. The system was configured for optimum performance, and mounted on the same server as the new version of the WFM.

Subaru's WFM was also upgraded to version 10.2, and configured to achieve Subaru's goal of 98+ percent accuracy. This allowed Subaru to institute an incentive program for its lift

truck operators, order pickers, and inventory control team.

Hub was also successfully upgraded to the latest version and integrated with Subaru's host Oracle ERP system.

Allocation times improved

Longbow developed a multithreading approach that allowed Subaru to reduce daily allocation times from one hour to under 8 minutes on average.

Process Streamlining

Longbow worked closely with the Subaru of America operations team to develop more

efficient use of the system to handle their day-to-day activities, and combined that with configuration and technical solutions for optimal results. As a result, Subaru of America reduced shipment planning and allocation process time from 2.5 hours to 20 minutes.

Ongoing Projects

Subaru of America is planning new projects to meet growing demand, and they are working with Longbow on these projects.

Reach out to Longbow Advantage to learn more about how they can assist you with your WMS at 1-888-904-4005 or email info@longbowadvantage.com.

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