



Automated Rental Management Solutions—Close Up

A Setting For Success – BBJ Linens

Fifteen years ago, Bill, Bonnie, and Judy joined their collective experience in the rental industry and specialty linen market and founded BBJ Linens. With an emphasis on customer service, and a flair for the fun and fanciful, BBJ Linens, based in a Chicago suburb, has grown into one of the largest specialty linen rental companies in the United States. From their eleven locations nationwide, they provide tablecloths, napkins, and chair covers for such notable events as the Kentucky Derby, PGA Tournament, the Chicago Symphony, the Seattle Opera, and even the Super Bowl.

The Challenge

Four years ago, the company had just one home-based showroom. QuickBooks was used for general accounting and they struggled to manage the rentals from a DOS-based program geared for rental agencies. Their accountant was forced to balance the books using manual journal entries as revenues grew beyond QuickBooks' capacities. With over 1,700 items and a time-critical mission, accurate inventory control is crucial. Staff lost confidence as they found inventory counts unreliable, but most significantly, the software only allowed for one warehouse. Business burgeoned despite these constraints. The owners knew they had a concept worthy of expansion—and that they needed software that could facilitate that expansion.

The Solution

David Wilburn, BBJ's financial officer at the time, was in-

involved in the new software selection, "We were stuck, with no ability to expand the business. Ideally we wanted an integrated solution combining financials, payables, and rental management, but had no illusions that it would be an easy task." BBJ began to review both accounting packages and stand-alone rental management software. In the rental industry, it is imperative to know what will be in stock when and where—thus their highest priority was

an inventory module that was bulletproof, and allowed for multiple warehouses. Of the software packages they reviewed, only MAS 200 with the integrated ARM (Automated Rental Management) system developed by Business Computer Systems, fit the bill. Designed by rental experts, the ARM system offers a considerable benefit. ARM features a complete set of integrated modules, the award winning MAS 200 accounting software for core accounting needs, and several rental specific modules. To have all aspects of their business under the control of one integrated system has significant advantages. Training time is reduced, and having the data together in one database helps ensure its integrity.



Automated Rental Management simplifies the complex scheduling requirements for BBJ Linens' 11 offices

The ARM team demonstrated the software solution on-site, and after the purchase, were back on-site to implement the system and train the company. BBJ chose to have the ARM team provide training for a core group of managers, who then trained the rest of the staff. The idea

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has worked well, and now BBJ has in-house experts that the staff can come to with questions.

David has since transitioned into the role of IT Director, and is making certain that the company's Citrix server and T1 (high speed data connections) lines provide uninterrupted service to the branches. Sixty-four users access the software daily—80% of those working primarily in the ARM modules. "We are power users," continues David, "We really pound on the software, ARM and MAS 200 can take the beating!" "We also save over 40 man-hours a week by using our new ARM Routing system" explains David, "It's great!"

Safe and Secure

Security of business data is paramount, and MAS 200 offers a vast range of security options from a broad modular level, down to an individual field level. "It's crucial for us to maintain a tight control over our inventory," says David, "with MAS 200 I gave the sales offices read-only access to Inventory, and also ensure that each office can only access their customers."

MAS 200 Adapts to Fit

The modular nature of MAS 200 is very appealing to BBJ, knowing they can add modules as their business expands and changes. "MAS 200 is growing with our company."

The Chicago area customer service team handles virtually all of the reservation entry, freeing the sales offices to focus on promotion. Three strategically placed warehouses store and distribute the linens. From ARM's reservation screen, the customer service staff can pick the warehouse closest to the customer, and see if the requested item is available in sufficient quantity. A graphic calendar displays the event date with three days displayed on either side of the event date. The operator can clearly see the quantities available in any warehouse on any

given day, allowing BBJ the flexibility of transferring rental items from one warehouse to another, in time for a customer's event.

BBJ appreciates that ARM and MAS 200 can adapt to the way they do business, rather than the other way around. As an example, BBJ commissioned the ARM team to program several custom changes to the ARM software. David is convinced that these changes give BBJ Linen the competitive edge in their market, "Other software packages out there are geared for the Ma and Pa shops, we set our sights bigger."

A self-confessed demanding client, David is very impressed by the service he receives from the ARM team. "We have developed great lines of communication over the years. I expect that from my vendors, and I get that from the ARM group."

Together, BBJ Linens, Automated Rental Management, and MAS 200 are catering to the needs of today, while well positioned for the events of tomorrow.



Automated Rental Management's graphical events calendar makes schedule commitments easy and accurate



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Headquartered in San Antonio, Texas, our firm has specialized in the rental industry and MAS 90 accounting software since 1986.

Since our firm supports over 200 rental companies like yours, you can be assured of our experience and expertise in solving your business problems.

If you need take control of your rental business, we would like to talk with you to see if Automated Rental Management is the right solution for you.

