

# Bearings Headquarters | Powered by VAI



## The Company

Established in 1934, the Bearing Headquarters Company (BHQ) is the leading single-source supplier of mechanical parts in North America. Based in Broadview, Illinois, it has more than 25 branch locations and 5 machine shops throughout the Midwest, selling the parts and services that keep heavy machinery turning at peak performance. The company's diverse customer base – manufacturers, distributors, power plants, and industrial facilities – relies on BHQ for specialized parts to repair, maintain, and overhaul machinery in industrial and manufacturing settings. Customers turn to BHQ for hard-to-find items and custom solutions for machine repair. Its comprehensive services include 24/7 troubleshooting, emergency delivery, equipment repair, gear, and conveyor manufacturing, as well as real-time online product ordering through BHQ Express.

### Industry

Wholesale Distributor, Durable Goods

### Requirements

Financial Management, Warehouse Management, Distribution Management, Predictive Analytics

## The Solution

For BHQ's customers, time is money. When machinery goes down, the clock starts ticking. To minimize downtime, BHQ needs to maintain a deep and comprehensive inventory that is ready to be delivered at a moment's notice.

For years, the company relied on a heavily modified distribution package that had grown cumbersome. As a high-touch, customer-focused company, BHQ has also given its various branches a high degree of operational independence so that each could meet its core customers' needs.

The company needed a solution

that could not only facilitate rapid order processing but could centralize finance and inventory data across the entire organization without limiting the ability of its branches to meet the diverse needs of the businesses it served.

The company turned to VAI's S2K ERP solution, a customizable software solution purpose-built to help mid-market companies improve efficiency, boost profitability, and elevate customer service. The software can be fine-tuned to the needs of any business, tying together finance and accounting, inventory, warehouse, sales, and customer service across the organization.

## The Results

Using the VAI S2K ERP solution, BHQ linked its inventory and finance departments to its order processing system, resulting in an accelerated fulfillment process. The S2K implementation standardized processes across all the company's branches, bringing new efficiencies to bear.

By using VAI S2K warehouse management system in its central distribution center, BHQ leveraged the system's order verification, picking, and physical inventory capabilities, increasing labor productivity in the facility.

Purchasing stock for inventory also became more efficient as the company began using VAI S2K predictive analytics with embedded AI to identify sales patterns and make smarter decisions about what products need to be ordered and when.

"With predictive analytics, our purchasing team is more centralized and efficient," said Sandy Swaim, Vice President of Information Technology, Bearing Headquarters Company.

BHQ boasts an average employee tenure of more than 20



*The Results continued:*

years, and all its customer relationships are built on personal interactions between customers and sales representatives. However, over the last few years, BHQ has recognized a change in customer behavior and the preference for younger employees who want more mobile options and e-commerce.

The VAI S2K ERP solution provides the company with a platform for the ongoing modernization and modification of its systems to meet these needs.

Swaim said she has been able to rely on VAI to support these improvements, noting that changes in technology and the business environment have required BHQ to continually innovate to remain competitive.

And VAI has routinely answered the call, providing BHQ with new tools to enable BHQ's employees to focus on providing customers with the service and support they need.

Since the launch, Bearing Headquarters Company has used VAI's ERP software to:

- Gain real-time visibility

into stock levels to optimize inventory control

- Streamline warehouse processes to reduce errors and increase employee productivity
- Accelerate the fulfillment process and increase labor productivity to bolster ROI
- Reduce workforce churn with an easy-to-use mobile application for intuitive employee training
- Identify sales patterns to make smarter decisions
- Monitor progress towards goals, improve decision-making, and boost revenue and profitability

“I consider VAI to be an extension of our team. From our skilled programmers and project managers to the efficient help desk support, everybody steps up to assist when we need it. I feel that there’s a true partnership here, and having the flexibility of always completing our projects on time is a terrific advantage.”

- Sandy Swaim, Vice President of Information Technology, Bearing Headquarters Co.