

# Rapid Growth Drives Reliable Parts ERP Upgrade

## Recent Acquisition Points to More Activity, Need for More Robust ERP Solution

### Background

When Reliable Parts of Tukwila, Washington acquired Appliance Parts Depot (APD) of Dallas, Texas in July of 2015, the first major expansion of a new era had begun. Reliable Parts had been a family-owned operation until acquired by Svoboda Capital Partners and Dot Family Holdings in 2014, with eyes on expanding the company's already substantial North American distribution footprint.

As a distributor of appliance and BBQ parts and accessories, Reliable Parts had been operating 30 locations and 3 distribution centers in the U.S., along with 30 locations and 4 distribution centers in Canada. The APD acquisition pushed their number of total U.S. locations to 45, and the new owners were now faced with merging their acquired ERP system into the legacy system Reliable Parts had been using to anchor their business since 1999, an old version of Iptor's system.

The old software had served the previous family-run business well, tracking the company's supply

chain management activities, from inventory planning and purchasing through supplier and warehouse management. However, as the business changed over the years, so did the software. And now, with so much custom coding and modification in place, with no internal governance to control the changes, the legacy system had grown out of step with Iptor's latest release. In fact, many of the workarounds had become standard issue on late-model ERP systems, including Iptor's, causing Reliable's new CTO, Lowell Millard, to make a decision.

In order to ensure smooth integration of future acquisitions and manage the growing transaction volume that would undoubtedly come with continued expansion, Millard decided to issue a major system refresh, reviewing Iptor, along with two other industry solutions, Acclaim and Prophet 21 by Epicor.

### Iptor Proves Out Over the Competition

After reviewing several product demonstrations, Millard elected to

### Case Study

## Reliable Parts

#### Need

An updated distribution-specific ERP system capable of integrating acquired businesses to support expansion

#### Capabilities

- Improved ability to handle significant increases in daily transaction volumes
- Flexibility and scalability to efficiently integrate partners and acquisitions and manage the 10% exceptions with Integrator
- New, intuitive graphical user interface and expanded planning capabilities with PlannerView
- Expanded ecommerce capabilities
- Expanded mobile interfaces

upgrade Reliable’s existing Iptor system to the latest version, partly because the new release proved superior to the competition on several key fronts, but also because the overall cost of the upgrade would be considerably less than a rip-and-replace installation.

**Mesa Group, Iptor’s Professional Services Partner, Gets the Assist**

Reliable Parts worked with certified implementation partner, Mesa Group, to manage the transition, which began with the onboarding of APD to the older system in April 2016.

“Our goal was to get the new stores onto our system as fast as possible, and begin generating a cash flow,” Millard said. “This meant first moving the APD stores onto our existing version of Iptor, before moving all of our operations onto the newer version in 2017.”

The onboarding process was projected to take about nine months. Key tasks during this phase included converting APD’s customer and historical data to the Iptor platform, merging the websites to share information and training APD’s personnel on Reliable’s existing version of the system.

“By taking this interim step, we effectively transferred the existing knowledge base to APD and set the stage for an easier transition to later versions,” said Jim Smith, Mesa Group President.

In addition, Reliable added two key modules to the legacy system, ahead of its version adoption. These included PlannerView, a powerful, adaptable, PC- based, graphical planning and information

management tool that provides real- time supply chain visibility, and Integrator, a powerful tool to manage systems integration and data management, replication and synchronization. The move to include these modules immediately shortened Reliable’s overall learning curve once the new system was launched.

**Taking the Long View**

While job one was getting APD stores integrated onto the system, the longer view was to expand Reliable’s ERP capabilities into new areas, including supply and demand planning, advanced inventory control and forecasting.

“Iptor represents a tremendous upside for us, as we move into new territories,” Millard said. “The scalability of the solution is exactly what we need long-term, and the ability to use the system out-of-the-box, without paying programmers to reinvent our solution, gives us excellent flexibility in pursuing new business.”

**Off Green Screens, On To Greener Pastures**

In addition, getting the Reliable Parts user community used to the new graphical user interface was a key training focus during the upgrade. For almost two decades, the team had gotten comfortable working on green screens.

“So far, everything we’ve seen from Iptor points to a successful roll-out,” Millard said. “We are confident we will be right where we need to be, thanks to the excellent help Mesa Group has provided us, and the can-do attitude Iptor has demonstrated every step of the way.”



We needed a solution capable of processing the thousands of transactions that Reliable Parts runs daily, plus the significant increase in daily transactions we expect as a result of our growth plans. Iptor was able to demonstrate the processing power to manage the volume. We chose them over two competitors, not only because the solution is transaction-capable, but also because it supports our wide geographic dispersion and e-commerce needs now and as we intend to grow.



Lowell Millard  
Reliable Parts CTO

**About Iptor**

Iptor is a leader in supply chain management, planning and logistics software and services. We help distribution companies world-wide solve complex challenges through connected, intuitive and adaptable cloud-based software. We also enable customers to focus on their core business by handling their infrastructure with powerful managed services offerings.

For more information, please visit [www.iptor.com](http://www.iptor.com)