



## Overview

Country/Region : United States  
Lumber Industry : Wholesale Lumber

Company Name  
Mac Donald & Owen Lumber Company

Company Profile  
Founded in 1968, Mac Donald & Owen Lumber Company continues to deliver higher premium quality lumber that is properly graded, color matched, and sorted to specific needs of customers.

Business Situation  
Mac Donald & Owen Lumber Company exceeded the capabilities of their old system and they needed a flexible, integrated enterprise solution that would integrate all their operations including accounting to help them deliver products faster down the supply chain.

Solution  
Implemented an integrated solution that comprised of Unique Data Solutions— LUMBERGEAR, Microsoft Office System, and Best Software's Peachtree Complete Accounting

- Benefits
- Improved company-wide integration.
  - Improved order fulfillment operations
  - Microsoft Office System integration
  - Improved reliability and system stability
  - Capability of e-commerce solution for customer orders and services
  - Real-time Information throughout the Enterprise
  - Barcode operations automation

## LUMBERGEAR Helps Mac Donald & Owen Lumber Company Achieve Efficiency and Enterprise Wide Integration

**“UDS took the time necessary to listen and respond to our specific software needs, and went beyond our expectations with wonderful timesaving innovations!”**

David Twite: President and CEO Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company

David Twite, President and CEO of Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company understands the important role that information technology and information systems play in the business environment and in particular the lumber industry.

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company specialize in high quality lumber species such as Red Oak, Hard Maple, and Cherry to mention a few. Customer service and quality products are very important to Mr Twite and as the final key decision maker he believes that delivering customer orders on time with higher quality products will continue to ensure the success of Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company.

Prior to implementing the LUMBERGEAR solution, their old inventory management system helped them accomplish the basic day to day activities of their operations but as their needs increased and as the company grew; they needed a solution that would be scalable, robust and reliable. Sales managers also needed the ability to analyze sales information to strategize for future planning as could not be accomplished in their old system.

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company knew it needed a powerful enterprise solution that was flexible and would integrate all areas of their business as well as connect historical data for strategic sales analysis. The ability to integrate LUMBERGEAR with their accounting package eliminated double entry of accounts receivable information as was previously done with their old software. Also the barcode integration feature would help increase accuracy and efficiency across all areas of their business.



## Situation

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company is a rapidly growing lumber company specializing in wholesale lumber, retail lumber, and dimension products. They specialize in high quality lumber species such as Red Oak, Hard Maple, Cherry, Hickory, Poplar, Soft Maple, White Oak, Birch, Beech, and Mahogany to mention a few.

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company has steadily grown to become a million dollar business with a team of about 30 employees including their own NHLA inspectors who ensure the quality of lumber on each board prior to the lumber being shipped for customer delivery. Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company, with headquarters in Sparta, Wisconsin, have bulk of their inventory in their main processing and distribution center located within the same vicinity as the corporate office. They also keep inventory in strategic areas nationwide to ensure that they deliver on time, every time to meet and exceed customer demands.

The lumber industry is a very challenging one and to remain competitive and achieve acceptable margins, the importance of efficiency, quality information flow, and accessibility cannot be stressed enough. David Twite, President and Chief Executive Officer explains, "As our business expanded we began to see that our current inventory software was not robust enough for our growing needs. In addition we determined that our old inventory software lacked much of the functionality that we desired. We set out to find a software solution that could provide us with a solid platform for growth but was still affordable. We also wanted a product that had a small learning curve to allow our people to seamlessly change over with little problems. We were looking for a product that was expandable to our needs!"

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company knew that it must quickly adjust to market

demands and customer needs and as a result, their business management software system must be flexible enough to support the ever-changing business model.

With additional demands created by explosive company growth, Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company implemented Unique Data Solutions - LUMBERGEAR at its corporate headquarters and processing center in 2004, moving from eLumber Solutions - eLumber Materials Management System.

Unique Data Solutions provided the company with a more comprehensive robust business management solution built on the Microsoft platform that can scale easily as the company continues to grow. David Twite says, "The fact that Unique Data Solutions spent years consulting, developing and perfecting LUMBERGEAR in a real working lumber environment was a big plus. They took the time necessary to listen and respond to our specific software needs. Unique Data Solutions went beyond our expectations with wonderful timesaving innovations and have done some truly amazing things with this software from bar coding, freight mileage calculation lookup, valuable yield and profit status, and integration with our accounting software to do invoicing. This enterprise solution is a powerhouse and will help us get our goods faster down the supply chain to our valued customers."

The size of Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company's employee including sales persons have also expanded rapidly, resulting in new challenges in managing customer relationships and proper coordination of information in the organization. Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company's management team had limited visibility into the sales side of the business. Getting basic information such as who their most valuable customers where and what products were selling more during different seasons was impossible through the old system.

The double entry of invoice information in their old inventory software and again in their accounting system was also a time waster. Accounting personnel wasted precious time entering information again into the accounting system instead of concentrating on more productive activities.

The lack of limited product support did not go well with Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company and they wanted good support because anytime the system is down and not up immediately they were potentially losing money. David Twite explains, "Unique Data Solutions offer several support plans to suit our specific needs and they made our migration process from our old inventory software to LUMBERGEAR nearly painless. Unique Data Solutions came on site during the transition and ensured a smooth transition by taking the hassle out of the change over. Their grasp of our industry made the changeover process very simple with little problems. Their professional staff also worked extremely well with our staff to ensure that things ran the way we wanted."

Reliability was another concern for them. When the size of their business information was minimal, things ran smoothly, but as the company grew and the size of their data increased, they occasionally had problems with the business information stored in an access database repository. The database would become corrupt and sometimes they lost valuable information and they were not always able to repair and bring back the database to its original state.

## Solution

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company like many lumber companies run their entire operations on the Microsoft platform using Microsoft technology.

The fact that Unique Data Solutions implemented their LUMBERGEAR solution on the Microsoft platform was a cost saver because it allowed for minimal hardware to be bought since most of the needed

hardware and software was already in place. The ability of LUMBERGEAR to leverage their existing IT infrastructure helped save implementation time and money.

The backend LUMBERGEAR database and business logic runs on a Windows® 2000 Server operating system and Microsoft SQL 2000 database management and analysis system. Also the ability of the LUMBERGEAR Online Solution is available to help Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company when they do decide that they want to enhance their customer service operations via a Customer Portal over the internet.

Unique Data Solutions using Microsoft technology was able to integrate accounts payable and accounts receivable information from LUMBERGEAR into Peachtree Accounting. Unique Data Solutions Development Services studied Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company's unique business rules and requirements needed for integrating accounting data across the enterprise and they developed a custom integration based on open architecture.

If needed, remote users can also log into the corporate system via a terminal server or through a secured VPN and work from their remote site with little performance loss provided that the right infrastructure for LUMBERGEAR is in place.

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company implemented their LUMBERGEAR solution with a variety of modules to take advantage of the capabilities of LUMBERGEAR and increase efficiency and in deliver quality information throughout the enterprise.

## Modules

- Sales
- Procurement and Purchasing
- Inventory Management
- Production
- Freight Transportation and Logistics

- Accounting and Financials Integration.
- Barcode System Integration
- Analysis and Reporting
- Graphing

On the recommendation of Unique Data Solutions Consulting, Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company implemented barcode integration with LUMBERGEAR and Intermec Sabre barcode scanners and Intermec Scan Plus. The choice of Intermec Sabre barcode scanners was ideal for warehouse staff because it is built for rugged use and the outdoor environment surviving numerous drops. The wireless features of the Sabre scanner also make it possible for real-time information to be reflected in the system whenever warehouse personnel update inventory information. The Scan Plus barcode scanners are ideal for the back end office but are less expensive and successfully integrate with the barcode module.

### Benefits

Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company began realizing benefits from the new solution almost immediately. The ability of LUMBERGEAR to fully integrate modules proved useful made it easier for them to get their products down the supply chain faster. The integrated features also made it possible for the shipping and logistics department to schedule transportation earlier because they were instantly notified when an order needed shipping to be scheduled. Other departments no longer needed to call or walk over to the shipping department to inform them that they needed to schedule a truck load or rail load.

The integrated features also make it possible for managers to have relevant access to critical data. The end result is that managers can make faster, more informed decisions, making it easier for salespeople to follow up opportunities and close deals faster.

### Improved Employee Productivity and Cost Savings

Because it now uses Unique Data Solutions LUMBERGEAR, Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company has cut down on the time spent on paperwork. The new system has made it possible for them to eliminate double entry in accounting, sales and production. Staffs are no longer being overworked when it comes to using the system and everyone knows what to do at the right time. Production people no longer need to do extra paper work and they can immediately see what lumber needs to be entered into production.

### Little Training Required

The intuitive and user friendly screens make it easy for users to understand what is going on. The fact that Unique Data Solutions LUMBERGEAR features Microsoft Office navigation style lists also make it easier to use because most users are already used to the Microsoft Office suite.

### Access to Information

Staff have real-time access to the backend data in Unique Data Solutions LUMBERGEAR regardless of whether they are in the corporate office, warehouse, or outside the vicinity. With the implementation of LUMBERGEAR Online, Mac Donald and Owen will further be able to provide online services to their customers and employees.

### Scalability and Growth

Unique Data Solutions LUMBERGEAR benefits from the increased scalability features of Microsoft SQL Server 2000. If data ever exceeded the current capacity of the server hardware and database, Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company would be able to easily scale their software and hardware to accommodate their business data. David Twite says, "We believe LUMBERGEAR will provide us with a solid reliable platform that can grow with our company over the years"

### Improved Security

Before implementing the LUMBERGEAR solution, Unique Data Solutions performed an in-depth security analysis at Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company site. Security was further tightened to ensure security of information.

## For More Information

For more information about Unique Data Solutions products and services, please call Unique Data Solutions at (608) 784-1536. You can also access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.udatasolutions.com](http://www.udatasolutions.com)

For more information about Mac Donald and Owen Lumber Company products and services, call (800) 657-6990 or fax them at (608) 269-4418. You can also visit their Web site at: [www.hardwoodlumber.net](http://www.hardwoodlumber.net)

## Unique Data Solutions--LUMBERGEAR

Unique Data Solutions is first and foremost and information systems solution provider that provides businesses with quality business management solutions that help them manage and control their information. LUMBERGEAR is a business management solution/enterprise solution that helps lumber companies control their business information and get their products faster down the supply chain with confidence.

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### Software and Services

#### ■ Products

- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft Windows 2000 Server
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional

#### ■ Services

- Unique Data Solutions Development Services
- Unique Data Solutions Consulting Services
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#### ■ Solutions

- LUMBERGEAR
- Peachtree Complete Accounting
- Microsoft Office System
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#### ■ Technologies

- Microsoft .NET Framework
- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Terminal Services
- Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications
- Microsoft Visual Basic.NET
- Active Server Pages

#### ■ Hardware

- Hewlett- Packard server station
- Dell workstations
- Intermec Sabre and Scanplus scanners