



Epicor for

Consumer Package Goods Distributors

Functionality

- ▶ Quotes and Orders
- ▶ Scheduled Order
- ▶ Customer Forecasts
- ▶ Integrated EDI
- ▶ GS1-128
- ▶ Order History/Previous Requests
- ▶ Customer-Specific Pricing
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In Your Industry

The consumer goods industry spans many traditional lines of business, delivering products to the retail sector in quantities suitable for end user consumption. Whether you are in consumer packaged goods or consumer durable goods, you know that time is money, and fast-moving trends mean you cannot let product sit on shelves.

The consumer goods industry includes some of the most competitive markets in the world. To succeed and grow, you need a business software partner that goes beyond “good enough” to deliver best-in-class capabilities that empower your business and let you drive your market into new paradigms—all while retaining the competitive advantages you have already accrued. The concept of lean manufacturing may have started in the automotive markets, but lean is now quintessential for success—as is a fully integrated planning, distribution, production, and accounting solution. At the end of the day, you need an industry-leading, fit-for-purpose software system designed around your needs.

Your customers may include distribution centers, local retail outlets, large multisite vendors, or a combination of these. Each customer will have their own procedures for ordering. You may be able to influence some customers to send you orders in your preferred format, but others will have their own way of working, and you need to support this or let your competitors take the business. You need to handle orders that are faxed, emailed, or sent in via Microsoft Excel. Some customers release orders from their forecast, while others send orders via electronic data interchange (EDI). You need a system that lets you respond to customer requests with accurate information—whether it be a faxed/emailed order acknowledgements or EDI. In an increasingly competitive world, the way you work with your customers can be as important as the products you supply.

A Comprehensive Solution

With more than a half-century of distribution experience, Epicor helps distributors grow sales, improve margins, and increase productivity with ERP systems that keep them healthy and thriving in today's highly competitive marketplace.

The Epicor Prophet 21 system is a leading ERP solution for distributors. Prophet 21 system is a fit-for-purpose, cloud-ready business system that combines proven distribution expertise with an end-to-end, web-enabled infrastructure and modern technology stack. Cloud and on-premises deployment options are both available, and distributors can start with an on-premises deployment and easily migrate to the cloud as their needs change.

Prophet 21 enables your most critical business areas to work more efficiently, including:

- ▶ Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- ▶ Order Management
- ▶ eCommerce
- ▶ Inventory Management and Purchasing
- ▶ Wireless Warehouse Management System
- ▶ Finance and Accounting
- ▶ Manufacturing
- ▶ Service and Maintenance
- ▶ Business Intelligence
- ▶ Enterprise Content Management (ECM)

As a consumer goods distributor, you need a technology provider who understands your needs. You must also choose a business partner with wide-ranging industry expertise and a vision to help guide you into the future. Epicor offers both. When you partner with Epicor, you can expect industry leading in technology solutions, professional services, and the industry-specific functionality you need to grow your business.

Quotes and Orders

Your order management processes directly affect your customers and how they view your business. Customers demand faster, better service and will go elsewhere if you can't meet their needs.

Prophet 21 enables you to complete the entire order entry process from one screen, allowing you to:

- ▶ Enter quotes and orders
- ▶ Convert quotes to orders
- ▶ Check stock



- ▶ Expedite orders
- ▶ Search price and availability requests
- ▶ View past invoices
- ▶ Verify shipping preferences

Whether orders are entered at the counter, remotely via a mobile computing device or laptop, through EDI, or over the web, information goes directly into your Prophet 21 solution for faster processing and no rekeying errors.

Scheduled Orders

Customers sometimes place orders that will ship over time. Delivery dates can vary from item to item or even within an item—requiring distributors to ship specific items or quantities on specific dates. Many distributors enter these as separate orders or track these orders outside their system—in spreadsheets or on paper. The Prophet 21 solution allows distributors to handle these types of orders directly in Order Entry.

Prophet 21 Order Entry allows you to manage release dates at both the order and line level. Multiple releases can be scheduled for the same order and can be entered using a specific date or using a rule—for example, 12 releases, once a month, that start on a specific date. Default settings allow you to determine when the order is expedited and picked.

Prophet 21 also helps manage inventory allocations for scheduled orders. Instead of immediately allocating material on a scheduled order, the system uses lean principles to allocate the material “just in time.” The calculation begins with the expedite date, then—using the next schedule review (purchase) date, the safety stock days, the lead time, and the lead time safety factor—Prophet 21 allocates the material “just in time.”

Customer Forecasts

Some customers provide forecasts instead of placing firm orders. The forecasts can be verbal, via spreadsheet, or even through EDI. Customers then expect you to track their forecast and have available stock based on the forecast dates and quantity. Additionally, the customer forecasts sometimes change over time, and they expect you to be able to adjust.

Prophet 21 allows you to enter manual customer forecasts or import forecasts from a spreadsheet or via EDI. Additionally, customer forecasts can be factored in Demand Planning—allowing your buyer to see actual demand alongside customer forecasts to make sure replenishments align with customer needs.

Integrated EDI

Many of your customers and vendors will require you to communicate with them via EDI—expecting you to be able to receive and/or send the necessary EDI transactions. The volume of these transactions require any EDI to be fully integrated with your business system.

Prophet 21 streamlines the transaction process by providing an easy-to-use interface for EDI transactions. This reduces order and processing costs, as well as time spent manually processing the documents. The Prophet 21 Scheduled Import Service Manager (SISM) can be run to automatically import transactions directly into Prophet 21 for processing. The Edit Import Suspended report allows for the review of transactions prior to their import into the database or upon failure to import. Each outbound document can be set to automatically export to trading partners when the transaction is completed from within the Prophet 21 system—reducing the need for manual intervention.

GS1-128

Many of your customers will require the GS1-128 shipping label. This label is important for trading in an EDI environment, because the labels can be the connection between the EDI documents and the actual cartons that you are shipping to your trading partner. The GS1-128 standards provide a unique identification system to use on barcodes and with the EDI transmission.

Prophet 21 complies with the GS1-128 standards and the Advanced Ship Notice (ASN) that many customers require. During the pack/ship process, Prophet 21 Scan and Pack allows your employees to scan and pack items, and the information gathered is then tracked and used to generate the GS1-128 and ASN information.

Order History/Previous Requests

How often do you deal with customers who ask for the same item they purchased in the past? When you ask for more specific information, do they only remember a portion of the item information, the quantity, or the date they bought it? Prophet 21 includes a previous request search that allows you to view the customer's sales history. You can narrow your sales history search by date range or keywords, and—in a few simple steps—add that item to the customer's current order. This saves time and eliminates trips to the file cabinet to thumb through customer invoices.

Customer-Specific Pricing

You can probably count on your core customers to order certain products from your company on a regular basis. It makes sense for you to reward frequent customers and encourage return business by offering special pricing. When a manufacturer offers you a price break, you may even want to pass those savings on to your customers.

Prophet 21 delivers the flexibility to set prices as you see fit—including offering select customers preferred pricing, offering pricing based on quantity breaks, and setting promotional pricing—helping you maintain your margins while meeting customer and competitive demands. You can even set start and end pricing dates on a customer, product, or product group basis to meet contractual obligations or for limited-time specials.

Contract Pricing

For many customers, you'll need to negotiate pricing down to the item level—establishing fixed, time-based net prices on a SKU-by-SKU basis. Prophet 21 enables you to set up time-sensitive contract pricing for these customers. Contract pricing is fully integrated in Quote/Order Entry to ensure the customer gets the right contract price on each transaction. Additionally, starting and ending dates on contracts allow you to track when contracts are expiring and set up contracts that will automatically kick in on the starting date.

Document Links

Epicor Prophet 21 offers a cost-effective, reliable alternative to space-consuming—and time-consuming—file cabinets full of paperwork. By giving you the ability to scan paper documents and link them to records within the system, Prophet 21 helps boost employee efficiency while cutting the time and expenses associated with maintaining traditional paper files.

Document links allow you to link maintenance and transaction records to any file on your network—from vendor invoices and customer purchase orders, to specifications and material safety data sheets (MSDS). You can even scan and save handwritten letters and faxed communications in the solution or link to emails that relate to specific orders. Because your employees will have better access to important customer and product information, service can improve. In addition, because they can email or fax the documentation directly from the Prophet 21 system, your employees can simply click on a link to those documents and send them instantly.

Item Lead Time Management

Managing your supply chain is as important as managing your

customers. Your items typically have long lead times and are often produced overseas—requiring you to balance changing customer forecasts with your manufacturer's production schedule and shipping time. In many cases, you're planning 90, 120, or even 180 days ahead. Additionally, you need to manage actual demand alongside customer future forecasts—factoring all this information together into your requirements generation.

Prophet 21 includes Demand Requirements Planning (DRP) functionality. DRP is a forecasting feature that is designed to anticipate your stock needs of particular items on a time-phased inventory basis. This is especially useful for items with long lead times that require you to forecast your inventory far enough in advance to allow for the item's lead time. Additionally, DRP lets you visualize your forecast and availability in the future—ensuring you know how much to buy and how to schedule an incoming purchase order.

Lot Tracking

Tracking item lots from origin through final shipment is a critical task that many distributors must manage each day. Customers often demand to know when, where, by whom, and to what specifications a product was made—and want you to provide documentation detailing each step of any process. Without the right tools and technology, managing these processes can easily overwhelm even the most organized businessperson. Fortunately, Epicor Prophet 21 simplifies lot tracking by making it easier for distributors to manage the most complex products and processes.

Prophet 21 allows you to assign limitless attributes to each lot—enabling you to determine exactly which data you associate with each item. Many distributors might also need to keep information about a product's genealogy from manufacturers and suppliers, so Prophet 21 makes it easy to record this type of information.

Some customers—like those in the aerospace, automotive, and medical industries—may require that you send specifications and/or certifications related to the lot they purchase, while others may not want such detailed information. Prophet 21 lets you customize records to match customers' documentation needs and will automatically print, fax, or email the information with packing slips, invoices, or other pieces of correspondence.

Serial Number Tracking

Important for recalls and record-keeping purposes, tracking serial numbers can be a big part of your business. Prophet 21 allows you to record the serial numbers on any item in your warehouse and offers flexibility in how you track this information. For example, you can record item serial numbers as they enter your business to produce detailed inventory reports, or you can record serial numbers when items leave.



Landed Costs

As more and more distributors acquire material from overseas sources, the process of determining the actual cost of an item becomes increasingly difficult. With inbound and outbound handling costs, freight and broker charges, and international taxes to consider, calculating the total cost of an item means understanding and properly calculating landed costs. Landed cost is the end cost of an internationally shipped item—including freight, duties, taxes, insurance, purchase price, and other costs. Since all of these factors affect the value of the item, it's important for businesses to be able to estimate and tally the full landed cost of any item they sell and ship.

The overseas tracking and landed cost functionality provided by Prophet 21 tracks and calculates each of these variables throughout the supply chain—from the manufacturer, to your receiving department, to your customer's door—to ensure that you never undercharge for an item—no matter the cost of sourcing the product.

Vessel and Container Tracking

With so many distributors acquiring material from overseas sources, tracking shipping containers and vessels has become increasingly important. A container may house a single purchase order or have material from multiple purchase orders—from various vendors—all shipped together. Updating shipping dates and estimated arrival dates for all the purchase orders can be incredibly laborious. You need a system that allows you to link purchase orders to containers and containers to vessels.

The Prophet 21 solution includes functionality to help you track container and vessel information. When receiving material from overseas, you can update your purchase order information while the material is in transit—tracking container, updated quantity, and vessel information such as ship name, the date it accepted your cargo, and the date it left port. By receiving stage delivery information, you can adjust your expected delivery dates to be more accurate and better manage your purchasing requirements.

The ship information also allows you to see where any delays are for accountability purposes. Changing the estimated arrival date on a vessel updates all the associated containers and purchase order lines. Additionally, Prophet 21 allows you to receive all the items in a container—regardless of the purchase order. This streamlines the receipt and put-away process to get the items on your shelves as fast as possible.

Multiple Currency

Many overseas vendors expect you to pay in their local currency. You need to do a currency conversion for quoted prices when your buyer is generating a purchase order, for the cost at receipt, for the resulting invoice, and the payment. To ensure financial statements are accurate, you need an ERP system that includes multicurrency functionality.

Prophet 21 allows you to track multiple currencies in both the quote-to-cash and procure-to-pay processes. Additionally, General Ledger (GL) accounts can be seen in both home and foreign currency. Accounts that hold foreign and home values for transactions that occur in a foreign currency can be restated in their home currency value at the end of each month—based on an end-of-month exchange rate. This keeps the balance sheet accurate and ensures they properly reflect actual values at the end of each month. This is vital because banks, investors, and lending institutions require this information to determine credit worthiness. This process not only makes updating the values of your accounts with foreign balances easier, but it also automates the posting process so that your financial information all remains in synch.

Customer/Vendor-Managed Inventory

Many distributors now offer to manage storerooms and stock bins and determine usage for their customers. This service is gaining momentum as one of the most important value-added services a distributor can offer. If performed manually, this process can be incredibly tedious, time-consuming, and inaccurate. However, with the right tools, it can lead to increased sales, better inventory control, and satisfied customers.

Epicor Prophet 21 allows you to manage any customer's inventory through either consignment—when you keep your stock in their warehouses—or through bin management—when you regularly replenish SKUs at their locations. You can schedule blanket releases, track what inventory is with which customer, and monitor usage trends to determine how much stock you need to carry to satisfy needs. Cycle counting features can confirm that inventory counts are accurate—both at your company as well as at customer locations—and lot and serial number tracking permits you to track stock and ensure well-organized inventory rotations. With the scalability and flexibility of your Prophet 21 system, you will have the capability to manage numerous customers' stockrooms.



About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.

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