

February 2001

Ever since Silver Plus Systems, Inc. became a member of the DDMS family in 1995, our goals have been:

- Provide a low-cost, simple-to-use, *complete* automation solution for small businesses
- Provide a system that helps small dealers grow and provides them with an easy transition to the more robust DDMS system.

With eNsite graphical software—which is actually a trimmed-down version of DDMS' eNsite Pro—small dealers now have the ultimate tool for growth. **eNsite is the new Silver Plus.** It's a brand new product built on the foundation of the leading software in the industry, with all of the advantages that a Windows 2000 platform offers. eNsite is state-of-the-art technology for small businesses that think big.

Inside

Our customers speak about service

Dealer Finds ASP service and online ordering a great combination

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eNsite News

Automation Solutions
for Small Businesses

Choose Software That Grows With You:

Mike Winkler and his wife started Longhorn Office Products, Inc., in January of 1999. "It was one of those wing-and-a-prayer start-ups! We started with no funding, no money, no nothing. We're now a \$2M company. We have no loans, and no outstanding debts," said Mike. In fact, Mike's company grew so fast, the software they chose couldn't keep up with their growth.

"When we started, we just needed a software program that got us by, and that's what it did; it got us by..." said Mike. They chose a software that was well-known in the industry among small dealers. "We thought the system would be able to handle our demands as we grew. Their marketing led us to believe that it could handle any size company. So we thought it would sustain our growth."

Two factors influenced Mike to change his mind about the software he chose:

- **The cost.** While his start-up costs had been fairly low, his monthly costs began to skyrocket as he added more employees, since leasing was his only option.
- **The performance.** The system became slower and slower and even began going down because it couldn't handle the load.

Switching to eNsite by Silver Plus has made a tremendous difference for Longhorn. "When we had the other system, we had to take turns on the computer. That alone has been a big improvement. With Silver Plus, everyone can do everything—enter contracts, do quotes... We use every feature—the history, the commissions—we've done it all."

"Overall, it's simple to learn. It will definitely help our growth," said Mike. He recently hired a new employee who learned eNsite's graphical interface quite easily. "It's been real nice that he can just get on it, and he's ready to rock."

Of course there is a learning curve involved when a company switches software, and Mike had to go live on eNsite faster than usual. "The other software was getting to the point that it was actually unreliable for what we were doing, so we had to go live on eNsite immediately. It was kind of a hectic beginning.

"We were used to a really simple system. It's simple because it was made for small businesses. So, when we converted over, we found that eNsite was definitely 'more adult,'" said Mike, "I would say the other program was more like a child's program. eNsite is more like an adult's program. But once we got through the teenage years, we're flying through the system. We're getting things done. It's a great system."

continued on back

Our Customers Speak...*about service*

Usually this space is reserved for comments from me about the progress of our company, advances in our software, and industry trends. But we all know that no one can tell you better about a product or service than the people who use it. That's why this issue is dedicated to letting you hear about Silver Plus Systems, Inc. from dealers like yourself.

Anyone can brag about their own customer service. But only a customer can tell you what that service is really like. So, for this issue, I'm turning this column over to our customers. I hope you'll find their insight helpful in making decisions about software for your business.

Traci Johnson

Going Live: No Problem!

When **Preston Office Supply** went live on Silver Plus Executive, they had to do it quickly. "We didn't have very much time to just do the demo," said Dixie Miller, "We had to go live within a short period of time," But the Silver Plus support staff made sure everything went smoothly.

"So we had no problems. The support staff was such a great help. They took so much time with us and would walk us through so much," said Dixie.

"They're just awesome people," she said, "They're easy to work with."

Ongoing: Exceptional!

"If the phone lines are down or the computers go down," said Dixie, "they're always letting us know

ahead of time, and they're always extending hours.

"On a couple of occasions, they've really gone the extra mile by helping me out of a tough situation from home," she said, "They've all been wonderful."

"We haven't had any problems with them not returning calls. I'm sure they get really busy with so many customers. But they always return a call," Dixie said.

Rusty Woods at Martin's Office Supply echoes Dixie's sentiments, "We've been running on Silver Plus so long now—for two and a half years—we hardly have any problems with it. The few problems we have are instantly taken care of."

As for attitude, "There's never a bad day for Bill! He's always up. He always feels good, and he's always a pleasure to talk to...I just called Jennifer a minute ago, and she's sick, doesn't feel good, and is still taking care of us."

Martin's is in the process of moving over to eNsite by Silver Plus, and they have found the same exceptional support applies. "That's one of the reasons we did the migration up to eNsite. We

knew we were going to be working with people that could help us.

New technical support employees are cut from the same mold. "We're getting to know Jimmy," said Rusty, "and he's always been responsive."

"...and the other side is, *they know us,*" he continued, "They know what size dealer we are, and what kind of demands we have."

A Good Partnership

Gary Tankerson of Star Office Supply describes his relationship with Silver Plus Systems as mutually beneficial. "They help me with a lot more things than just my Silver Plus system, and it's kind of a give and take relationship," Gary said. "I consider myself sort of their 'eyes in the field.' There are certain issues that I've pointed out to them, and I've noticed a lot of improvements and enhancements in the system that are things we've needed or requested."

"I never have a problem getting an answer from them," he continued, "I always get a very straightforward and honest answer out of them, no matter what the situation might be."

Gary also knows that the support staff stays on the cutting edge, "and knowing that kind of stuff makes a big difference to us. We know we're getting the most recent knowledge available, and top quality help."

**"They're just awesome people!
They're easy to work with."**

—Dixie Miller, Preston Office Supply

Dealer Finds ASP Service and Online Ordering a Great Combination



For Marc Grambo at Office Spectrum in Irvine, CA, an ASP service was the way to go for his business. It was just a matter of deciding which one.

ASP stands for Application Service Provider. It's an extremely economical way for small dealers to run their business using state-of-the-art software without having to hire IT experts. They access their software and database via the Internet. Their backups, troubleshooting, and many daily tasks are performed for them by the service. Whenever a new version is released, it's automatically loaded for them. All they have to do is run their business.

An ASP is economical because there is basically no start-up cost, and no investment to make in technology that becomes obsolete quickly. Instead, you pay a monthly fee based on the number users, and access your system from any PC or "thin client." You may purchase your hardware from anyone.

Marc, who had been a Silver Plus Executive user, saw the advantages of an ASP and investigated his options thoroughly. "I decided to use an ASP for various reasons,"

"[the other e-commerce product] was pretty much just an online ordering system, not an online shopping system, like Dealer Station DDMS Edition."

said Marc, "including that I can access it pretty much from anywhere. I have a computer set up at home. I can access everything at any time from home. And we don't have to have our own equipment, like routers and that kind of thing, at our facility."

While Marc looked at other ASP services, a couple of advantages to Silver Plus' eNsite Anywhere made his deci-

sion rather simple: "It's graphical, which is a lot easier to use. And it tied in really well with Dealer Station® DDMS Edition [formerly ACUMA II]."

Marc is convinced that using eNsite Anywhere will help him grow his business, "I definitely think it will help us. We've actually seen an increase in our business just because of the amount of time it saves," he said, "It has enough flexibility and different functions that give us a lot of reporting capabilities and a lot more detailed information

Advantages of eNsite Online over other ASPs:

- **It's Graphical**
- **The best online ordering system available is completely integrated with eNsite Anywhere**

that we can work with." Marc is able to easily export data from his system into popular software programs like Excel and then manipulate that data any way he'd like.

As for Dealer Station DDMS Edition, Marc found it to be the most robust e-commerce product on the market. The other ASP system he considered had an e-commerce product that didn't even come close to meeting his customers' needs. "Their Website is pretty much just an online ordering system. It's really not an online shopping system. They don't have an online catalog. While they do access the same item file, there isn't a picture catalog, and there's no way to search the catalog and see pictures," he said,

"Basically the customer would have to sit there with a catalog, find the item, and then punch in the item number. Many of our customers don't even use the paper catalogs anymore. They just go right online and find whatever they need. If they do know the item number, they can use the quick order. But if they don't, they can search the catalog in a million different ways to find what they need."

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Mike did quite a bit of shopping around before choosing eNsite. In fact, Silver Plus was at the bottom of his list when he first started his search. He had heard that it was “tough to learn,” and that there was “too much to it.”

“I was originally going to go with DDMS instead of Silver Plus, but the sales-people at DDMS were very helpful; they knew Silver Plus would be more economical for my company, and at the same time offer everything we needed.” And, because eNsite is a scaled-down version of DDMS’ robust eNsite *Pro*, whenever Mike’s company is ready to move up to DDMS, the transition will be painless.

“I was skeptical at first, but that’s because I didn’t know it was a new graphical package. Then I saw the demo site online. I also talked to my United rep, and others, who confirmed that it was a good system.”

Mike was also influenced by the fact that Silver Plus and DDMS are now sister companies to IOS². Since Long-

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horn uses Base Station™ for e-commerce, Mike could see the benefits of choosing compatible software from the makers of the most progressive

software in the industry. “Eventually, it’ll just be one fluid motion, from order entry straight to transmission to wholesalers, straight to customers. We’ll need a lot fewer customer service people,” said Mike.

Longhorn Office Products is a perfect example of the kind of businesses that thrive and grow using eNsite by Silver Plus. At their present rate of growth, they’ll be ready for the more robust DDMS system before long, and the transition will be easy.

“We’re trying to be the number one office supplier in our area. That’s what we’re shooting for. Right now we’re number two or three. We’re already up there, and we’ve only been in business two years...compared to their 20. Here we come! Be careful!”