

Four Star Salon | Powered by VAI



The Company

In 1989, Jeffrey Cohen founded Four Star Salon Services, one of six independent family distribution companies, including TruStar Salon Services, Stars Companies, and Symbiotic Salon Services, to help service the beauty industry by distributing professional salon products. Four Star Salon Services has become the industry leader in both professional salon product distribution and educational services. From color workshops to retail seminars and receptionist training classes, it offers a variety of services. With Four Star Salon Services, its siloed ERP software systems were responsible for managing everyday processes and reporting at each location. Four Star Salon needed a way to bring together all the various components to streamline operations and increase productivity. VAI's unlimited user license feature provided the stability to help Four Star Salon Services continue its growth trajectory.

Industry

Wholesale Distribution, Durable Goods

Requirements

WMS, Point-of-Sale, Mobile, Cloud, Analytics, Unlimited User Licensing

The Solution

In its search for a new ERP solution, Four Star Salon Services' main goal was to find a solution that brought all locations under one system that had a solid support structure in place. The company also sought to invest in a solution that would allow it to continue its growth path.

With the addition of the new Four Star Salon Services locations, the company became Stars Companies, and added another layer of complexity. Some of these locations were managed by different software solutions that performed different functions, and this system didn't enable a cohesive way to collaborate or streamline operations. To continue its upward growth trajectory and compete in today's fast-paced beauty business world, it needed a solution that would fit all its needs and propel it to the next level.

As soon as Four-Star Salon Services learned of VAI's unlimited user licensing and industry-leading support offerings throughout the implementation process and beyond, selecting VAI's S2K ERP software suite became the obvious choice.

"The most important requirement in choosing an ERP solution was to have every location up on one system," said Herb Chow, IT Director, Four Star Salon Services.

"We looked at others ERP solutions, and even investigated within our own systems, to see what other technologies could help us grow. Nobody was able to meet the needs that we had from an accounting, manufacturing, and distribution standpoint. VAI's onsite support was beyond anything we could have imagined."

The company opted to run their VAI S2K ERP software in VAI Cloud. Continued Chow, "We have a data center that houses our software which all locations dial into. We do not have to worry about having the machine in house if something goes wrong with the communication line or if the system goes down - we now have it in the data center where all support needs are taken care of through their servers."

"We use S2K for Order Entry, WMS, Point-of-Sale, Analytics, and Mobile," said Louis Caravella, Vice President & Partner, Four Star Salon Services. "As opposed to previous applications, we do not have to come out of a screen or move over to sign on to another window with VAI S2K ERP - one sign on and we're in every company. Analyzing GLs and any kind of reports allows me to see every company within the report, and I don't have to worry about marrying files together. It means a lot."



The Solution continued:

Throughout the implementation process, VAI worked alongside the Four Star Salon Services IT team to ensure a smooth transition process. During this trial run, Four Star Salon Services invited its other locations to visit and witness the software in action. This gradual onboarding process helped strengthen the remaining locations' implementations when they began using VAI's S2K ERP suite. With all its locations now operating on the same ERP system, and because of the scalability granted by VAI's unlimited user licensing, Four Star Salon Services has added four new locations in just the past few months.

Four Star Salon Services' work with VAI's unlimited user licensing and S2K suite has allowed it to streamline all accounting, manufacturing, and distribution processes on one central system.

Before using VAI's S2K software suite, Four Star Salon Services had multiple software solutions managing its different locations. Each time one of its 250 employees wanted to check the availability of a particular item or view

reports, the work process was halted to call another location and conduct additional follow ups. Using VAI's S2K ERP software suite, Four Star Salon Services' team is now able to better service its customers and locations to help expand its business.

"One of the nice features of the warehouse is the S2K Order Manager, continued Caravella. "The warehouse manager will investigate the file and see all the orders that must be distributed to the pickers with scanners. On the screen they have certain codes. If the item has professional items on it - which is important for the salon to have - the warehouse manager will distribute those orders first. Those orders will be released to a picker with a scanner, they'll pick the order, it will get boxed, packed up, put on a skid, and shipped out. "

Shampoos, conditioners, and styling products, for example, are exclusive to salons and are one of the special features of salon products. Some manufacturers have added invisible barcodes to their products to track individual items, each of which has a unique ID number, to preserve the integrity of the product. To complete the warehouse process, Four Star Salon Services scans this barcode, attaches it to the item on the order, records it in their internal database, and transmits it to the distributor.

With VAI S2K Mobile app, the company now has a tool for the sales reps that was not possible with their previous system. "Prior to VAI Mobile, the sales reps went out blind to customers not knowing how much they purchased, what they had in open invoices, or what we had in inventory to sell to the customers," said Chow. The application allows them to arm their reps with the tools needed to do their job and better assist customers. They can call up each customer and see exactly what order they placed, what's in stock, and do their job more efficiently than ever before.

The company chose 8" tablets to allow the sales reps to have a bigger picture to better see the items on the screen. They've rolled those out to customers so they can go into the mobile app and view orders and invoices. They can also place their own orders, which will save time both in Four Star Salon's customer service department and for their sales reps.

The VAI Analytics reports generated each month gives details by sales rep, vendor, division, and company, along with information on the company's professional (hair color and developers) and retail sides. "We need to know how much money is being sold on the professional and on the retail end. S2K Analytics provides that," continued Caravella.



The Results

VAI's ERP solutions have dramatically improved Four Star Salon Services' operations and reporting. The company was able to leverage VAI's unlimited user licensing to add an additional four locations and will continue to utilize it for additional growth. "We weren't going to spend money on a new system that didn't allow us to move forward," said

Debra Janas, VP of Operations, Symbiotic Salon Systems, LLC, a division of Stars Companies. "At any given time in my workday, I have seven sessions open at the same time. Because we're constantly switching focus from one of our locations to another, we must be able to toggle between different functions rapidly and seamlessly. Rather than backing out of one issue to address another, VAI's comprehensive solution allows us to keep multitasking effectively."

Since the launch, Four Star Salon Services has been using VAI's ERP software to:

- Effectively multi-task
- Better assist customers
- Switch between tasks quickly and easily
- Achieve growth trajectories
- Streamline processes on one central system

"VAI brought growth to us as a company. We can add another 30 companies if needed without a problem, because VAI is always looking to keep up with technology and do new things. Four Star has really grown over the years, VAI has grown over the years, and we'll stay updated with technology which will make us a leader in our industry."

- Louis Caravella, Vice President & Partner, Four Star Salon Services