

Houle Electric Turns On Coupa's Web-Based Purchasing System

“ We are very pleased with Coupa. It has enabled us to automate our purchasing process at a fraction of the cost of other solutions. Coupa has streamlined our purchasing process and made it very efficient – a huge source of competitive advantage in any contracting business. ”

Vito Donatiello,
Purchasing Manager at Houle Electric



Based in Burnaby, in the province of British Columbia, Canada, Houle has over 300 employees across five office locations. With a portfolio that includes some of Western Canada's most distinguished landmarks, Houle offers a wide range of expertise in commercial, industrial and institutional projects. From pulp mills, office towers and shopping centers to schools, hospitals and bridges, Houle has been known to undertake any-size project with confidence and professionalism.

Before Coupa, each of Houle's locations managed their procurement process themselves using spreadsheets and paper. As the business grew, the organization found itself overrun with thousands of Microsoft Excel files. As a result, activities such as 'the ability to cross-reference a part in a drop ship order to check its status' or to 'find the lowest price paid for a part while placing a new order' began to consume more and more time. With procurement a key component of any contracting business, Houle knew it needed a system to automate their purchasing process.

"We wanted to make sure that the new procurement system did not require a significant upfront investment. Besides, you don't know if something will work well within your environment until you try it, and a large upfront investment would have been very risky for us", said Vito Donatiello, Purchasing Manager at Houle Electric.

Why Coupa

- Intuitive, easy-to-use solution that requires minimal training to get started
- Robust functionality to automate the end-to-end procurement process
- Affordable solution – 8 times less expensive than comparable solutions
- 100% web-based solution, available anytime from anywhere

Coupa Solution

- Go Live: September 2007
- Coupa Application: Premier
- Users: 40
- PO's Processed: 1,300

Results

- Super-fast electronic archive of PO's – purchasing can support at least 20% more jobs with existing headcount.
- Better compliance with purchasing rules, no more incomplete requests or time wasted chasing down additional information.
- Better consistency with accounting through integration that provides end-to-end visibility in a job-costing environment.

“
You don't know if something will work well within your environment until you try it, and a large upfront investment would have been very risky for us.”

Vito Donatiello,
Purchasing Manager at Houle Electric

Customer At A Glance

- Customer: Houle Electric
- Location: Burnaby, British Columbia
- Industry: Engineering / Construction
- Employees: 300
- Website: <http://www.houle.ca/>



After evaluating various solutions, Houle selected Coupa in the fall of 2007. Their key reasons for selecting Coupa were:

- Ease-of-use. The solution was very intuitive and easy to use. In fact, later on when Vito hired an assistant, she became proficient in the system in no time.
- Functionality. The solution was comprehensive and contained all the capabilities that Houle needed to automate their purchasing process.
- Cost. Because Coupa was a 100% web-based solution, Houle discovered it was about 8 times less expensive than a comparable solution in the market.

Within about three months after selecting Coupa, Vito was so confident that the new solution was running well that he decided to stop using the old spreadsheet based system altogether. Since switching to Coupa, Houle has processed over 1,300 purchase orders through the system.

According to Vito, the benefits Houle has seen from the system include:

- Having a super-fast electronic archive of PO's. Once the order is placed, a purchasing manager can quickly search the system by various parameters for activities such as checking the status of a part on order or identifying the supplier that returns should go to. Armed with such information, purchasing can now quickly resolve ad hoc inquiries or issues in the field. In the old system, it took significantly longer to search through spreadsheets to get the status information needed. As a result of this, purchasing can support at least 20% more jobs with their existing headcount.
- Better compliance with purchasing rules. Coupa forces everyone to enter all the required data for a transaction, so follow-on activities that need such information become more efficient. For example, with Coupa, the Purchasing managers no longer have to deal with supplier records that do not contain contact information, as was the case with the previous system.
- Better consistency with accounting. Coupa supports the ability to capture commodity codes and accounting codes for a part - consistent with how their Timberline accounting package categorizes them. The integration capability of Coupa will allow Houle Electric to integrate their purchasing and accounting processes and provide end-to-end visibility into a job-costing environment.

"We are very pleased with Coupa. It has enabled us to automate our purchasing process at a fraction of the cost of other solutions. Its extremely intuitive user interface makes user adoption easier – a key success factor for any solution. Coupa has streamlined our purchasing process and made it very efficient – a huge source of competitive advantage in any contracting business", added Vito Donatiello.