

# Sacoma Accelerates Success with Epicor & Arris

## Industry

Manufacturing

## Client Since

2022

## Solution

Epicor

The people at Sacoma Specialty Products are problem solvers, operating as a privately owned metal fabricator for automotive and heavy truck applications in Edinburg, Indiana. They specialize in designing, manufacturing, and assembling metal-stamp products and engineered solutions for vehicles, accelerating transportation worldwide.



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Sacoma Speciality Products

## KEY BENEFITS

MAKING THE COMPLEX, SIMPLE.

- Improved inventory control
- Real-time, flexible shipping
- Seamless upgrades
- Ongoing strategic & technical expertise

When Andy Reid, the Controller at Sacoma, joined the company in 2022, he inherited significant challenges stemming from an incomplete Epicor implementation with a former vendor. The previous management’s lack of support for the chosen Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system resulted in zero buy-in from staff and, consequently, a forced implementation. Reid states, “We struggled for a couple of years trying to use an ERP system that we really didn’t understand.” Knowing what they were looking for in a system, they knew they needed an ERP intervention that requires a high level of strategic and technical expertise.

## Overcoming Hurdles

Sacoma needed to use Epicor in the plant for job management, inventory, and financial reporting. However, because of the lack of training, staff only had very basic skills. Unfortunately, the company does not have a front office presence or tech-savvy users. There were no super users, and no one knew how to work with Epicor’s engineering functions, which are integral to their business. Essentially, they had a system with all the necessary modules to reach their goals yet lacked the knowledge to use it properly.

The team had several discussions about changing systems but for a few reasons decided they it would be better to re-implement Epicor properly and train staff on how to use it. Sacoma contacted Epicor for advice and they recommended working with Arris Consulting, a long-time Epicor partner. Thankfully, Arris turned out to be the ideal one.

## Clarity Through Analysis

Chad Smith, a partner at Arris Consulting, took the project’s lead. Reid explained, “Arris led the initiative to identify where we had the biggest deficiencies in training and basic knowledge. They helped us develop training for that, delivered that training, and really have helped us clean up our implementation of Epicor.”

Arris started with careful analysis and discussion with the Sacoma departments. The teams focused on pinpointing areas that had the greatest potential for improvement and impact, which included creating a brand-new Epicor environment. Interviews were conducted in several business areas, then thorough and engaging system training was implemented to cultivate more proficient and knowledgeable Epicor users.



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“The biggest benefit Arris has provided for us is helped us develop some subject matter experts in-house,” says Reid. This allowed Sacoma to be much more self-sufficient in managing its manufacturing operations and maximizing efficiency.

Additionally, Reid recalls, “Chad’s approach was unique to us. He was able to come in where other vendors were not and was able to identify or sympathize with our struggles. What we were struggling with, he’d seen already. That was what set Arris apart - the knowledge of manufacturing, the knowledge of inventory control, and the understanding of how Epicor is best set up to benefit manufacturing and inventory. Chad was able to pinpoint improvements based on his experience.”

## Mastering Inventory

After the previously failed Epicor implementation, one area staff struggled with was inventory control. However, since Sacoma was now better trained to understand how Epicor works, they were able to re-align their business objectives to point in the same direction as their ERP system. This included restructuring their fabrication business unit and moving it towards a make to order approach as opposed to make to stock.

Reid explains, “Arris recommended changing the nature of how we make fabricated parts. We were building everything and putting it in inventory. In those fabrication processes, we have several steps along the way that when you build to inventory has the tendency to make excessive inventory.” He continues, “They recommended changing the method of how we set up our methods of manufacturing within Epicor and build-to-order instead of build-to-stock. That has made a tremendous improvement in the amount of inventory we have on hand and the amount of inventory we have in that work-in-process status. That was a tremendous help to us.”

Sacoma had two different sites set up in Epicor and in certain cases, this was causing transfer issues between business units. Reid says, “With Chad’s recommendation, we went through a process just this past year and took an old Epicor environment that had multiple sites set up for each business unit and converted that into a new environment that’s all one site. That’s

simplified a lot of the inventory transfers that we were doing between sites and allowed us to really utilize the flexibility we have on the floor within one job as opposed to transferring between business units having multiple jobs.”

## Enhancing Shipping Precision

At the request of a potential customer, Sacoma needed to provide shipping verification and have checks in place to avoid mislabeled shipments and shipment errors.. For package control, Sacoma used Epicor’s Kinetic Mobile Warehouse product. With Arris’ guidance, they integrated package control identification (PCID) software, which, during the final shipment stage, verifies that the sales order matches the inventory being shipped. This allows for scanning, printing and labeling on the dock in real-time. PCID has given Sacoma more flexibility on the dock to identify the correct product to be shipped on a particular sales order and has improved inventory match to sales orders.

Reid states, “It’s eliminated a lot of the mislabeled shipments. We’ve got better inventory match to sales order than we did previously. It’s really an example of utilizing the technology to improve our standing with a customer and open up opportunities to grow business with that new customer.” Working collaboratively, the Arris and Sacoma partnership successfully delivered this solution which allowed Sacoma to win the customer’s business. Additional efficiencies and accuracy gains for other customers has been a very welcome side effect to this.

Sacoma’s supportive partnership with Arris has given them the confidence to upgrade to the current version of Epicor and move Kinetic to the cloud. The migration to the cloud provides immediate cost savings from having fewer virtual servers and licenses required for their current on premise installation. There’s also the reduction in total cost of ownership due to the automatic upgrades and maintenance being included in a cloud scenario. “Chad has really taken the lead in guiding us through that upgrade process. We have an Epicor support team available to us, but frankly, Arris Consulting is more responsive. They understand clearly what needs to be done, and they’re going to help guide us through that upgrade,” says Reid. Sacoma plans to continue to leverage Smith’s expertise whenever they need help

with their use of Epicor. “The value has been created by Arris, not necessarily by Epicor,” confesses Reid.

## Strong Partner, Lasting Impact

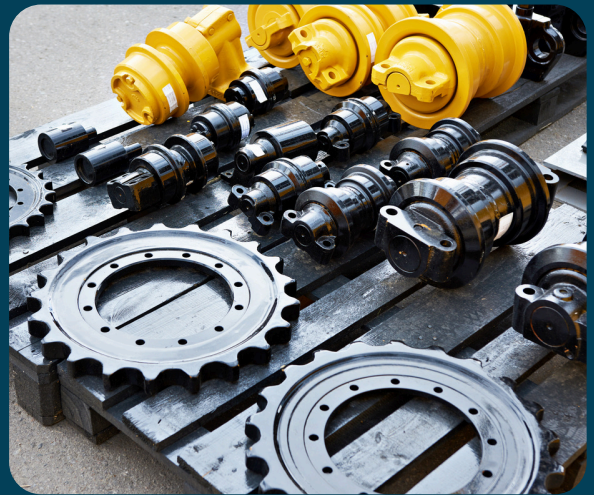
Arris’ responsiveness has been influential in Sacoma’s success because they needed a vendor who was available in real-time for support. Reid says, “Chad has been available for us 24/7, regardless of whether it’s a manufacturing need, engineering need, or inventory control need. He’s been available to us by phone or email just about any time of the day. So, we’ve never had a situation where we had to wait multiple days to get a response back from Arris.” Arris walks the walk and is a strategic partner, not just a vendor or help desk. “Can’t say enough about Arris’ willingness to partner with us as a client. We truly do view Chad as an employee. His availability and commitment to getting it right, we feel like he’s a member of our team,” states Reid.

Smith has played a huge role in Epicor’s re-implementation and Reid credits his expertise and manufacturing knowledge to the improvements they’ve made in their processes. He continues expressing his appreciation of Smith by saying, “What’s made the difference with Arris is Chad’s depth of understanding not just of the software he’s supporting, but of our manufacturing process. Chad could do my job at any manufacturing company. That’s the depth of his knowledge.”

## Driving Manufacturing Excellence

The Arris team’s strategic and technical expertise has made a major impact on Sacoma’s metal manufacturing processes. Arris offered strategic support by identifying large-scale projects to undertake so Sacoma could better leverage Epicor’s functionality to enhance operations. Reid explains how Arris’ technical support has helped them, “The majority of the time, Chad and his team have been technical partners in helping us understand when we don’t need to make a large strategic change, what can we do on a smaller scale to improve our processes. It’s really that technical expertise that Chad and his team have had within the Epicor environment that has made the biggest improvement to our business.”

Reid finishes by saying, “The expertise within Arris is what sets them apart.” When they promise to deliver, they deliver and always follow through. That includes guiding Sacoma through major projects aimed at reducing manufacturing inefficiencies, as well as routine system upgrades that give staff access to new functionality that ultimately improves operations. This meaningful partnership between Sacoma and Arris ensures Sacoma consistently receives the Epicor support and solutions needed to thrive in the busy and demanding world of metal manufacturing.



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