



# An American Story

Automating built-to-order and effortlessly staying ahead of it.

 **Algorithm**





Bob Drake Reproductions is a great example of the American Dream coming true. Introduced to automobile body and paint work by his father as a boy growing up in Wisconsin during the '50s, Bob began studying early Ford's as they were becoming popular. By the mid-1960's Bob was trading pre-'50s Fords and parts, a hobby he eventually turned into a business that started along with his wife Pat in 1971, manufacturing parts in their home garage.

During the past 47 years, Bob Drake's inventory of parts has grown to over 7,000 products including many innovative hot rod parts, driven by his dedication in serving purist early Ford restorers. His original one-man garage operation, now owned and operated by his son Trent and family, employs a staff of over 40 and is housed in three buildings with a combined space of over 75,000 square feet in Grants Pass, Oregon.

### **DATA SYSTEMS STALLING GROWTH**

In 2008, Bob Drake Reproductions (BDR) found itself being held back by the systems they were using to run their business. Their Macola ERP had problems from the outset. The staff found it had a unique set of issues that seemed to outweigh the promised benefits. In fact, the company had to add additional staff just to manage it. Even with that team they couldn't get the reporting they needed to best run the company. The reports included in their software were woefully inadequate, and the external report writer required advanced SQL knowledge.

Since BDR sold to other businesses and to retail customers they needed both B2B and B2C support from their system. This, too, required extensive customizations and by 2012 the expense of maintaining Macola had become unacceptable, so they terminated their support relationship with the system developer (ECI). On their own, with only their one support person to focus on it, they added an eCommerce system that promised the ability to furnish customers with a Web portal to ease ordering. Even that had been limited to just one ecommerce solution for their back-end systems.

They soon found it to be outdated, outmoded, and holding them back from running their business the way they wanted to.



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## SUCCESSFUL SEARCH FOR A NEW SOLUTION, AND A NEW SOLUTION PROVIDER

In 2017 BDR began a search for a system solution that could serve them well. They began by looking at the larger, more popular platforms such as Sage, Infor, and Netsuite. Realizing they were looking for something with a fresh, current perspective on business automation they encountered Acumatica. Here was a company that evoked good feelings among the members of the search team. Even better, they had a direct connector to BDR's new choice of eCommerce platform. Very responsive. They took an immediate and obvious interest in Acumatica and how their systems could help.

As they discussed their experience, needs, and aspirations with Acumatica, the conversation came around to deployment and support. Acumatica pointed them at a top consulting and deployment partner who had extensive experience both with their existing system, and migrating companies off of it and onto Acumatica. They assured BDR that Algorithm was the best fit for their business model.

Algorithm impressed them as the ideal partner to help them achieve what they had wanted to do for years. They were ready to make commitments to specific objectives, timelines, and budget.

*“With Acumatica, the orders just COME!!!”*

### IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT

The first and most profound difference BDR saw was how incredibly easy it was to receive and process a Web order. Previously, on their old system, there was a full-time salesperson assigned only to taking online orders. They spent most of their time cleaning up incoming orders so they could be processed, reaching out to about a third of those customers to clarify or correct something, and then entering the order. The entire advantage of taking orders online was wasted.

Exclaims BDR Vice President Trent Drake, “With Acumatica, the orders just COME!!!” He continues, explaining that problems are rare and no order requires more than a 30-second double-check. That full-time salesperson is today selling full-time!



*“Acumatica, has put so much thought into what data needs to present and how to present it . . . ”*

Approximately 70% of the components BDR uses in manufacturing parts come from Asia with long lead times. With their old Macola systems they were forced to use Excel spreadsheets to manage those, but now Trent Drake informs us, “With Acumatica, we can make those changes easily and do mass changes with lead times.”

Another time-saving advance takes place daily in their warehouse, where orders for multiple parts among their 7,000 bins are automatically routed so the picker takes the shortest route and completes orders in the fastest possible time. And where they could never consider using barcodes with their old systems, Acumatica has made it easy to use them to improve picking accuracy and part tracking.

Acumatica reporting capabilities have benefitted their business tremendously. Previously, they had needed to engage a consultant any time they wanted a report created or modified. With Acumatica most of the reports they need are a click away. For unusual reporting, Acumatica makes it easy for them to send the needed data to Excel where they can quickly obtain the answers they seek. Trent Drake acknowledges,

“Acumatica has put so much thought into what data needs to be presented and how to present it, and do it in a way that your average user can create these reports instead of having to have a consultant.”

### **SUPPORTING THIER SIGNATURE OFFERINGS**

Bob Drake is perhaps best known for rendering beautiful reproductions of the grilles on 1940-era Fords. Each is built to order and requires ordering and coordination of a variety of components and a variety of vendors to build them. In many cases, those vendors ship the finished product directly to the customer. With their earlier systems each of these orders was a major management challenge. Lack of visibility into the receipt of all parts of the bill of materials resulted in significant delays, uncertainty as to whether or not finished products were actually shipped, and ultimately a significant amount of late billing.

Now with Acumatica, they’ve been able to automate the entire process and effortlessly stay ahead of it. Less time investment and prompt billing turns into significant cost savings.



## THE OUTCOME

### WINNING NEW BIG BUSINESS WITH EASY INFORMATION ACCESS

BDR recently pursued a really large player in the aftermarket automotive space. The vendor application asked for specifics that Drake qualifies as “huge” information requirements including advance notification of availability and delivery times. “Without Acumatica,” he explains, “we simply could not have done that. We could not have met their data retrieval specs. And it would have cost us a ton of money just to fill out the application!”

### AN EFFECTIVE ALGORITHM SOLVES THE PROBLEM

Trent Drake recognizes that all of Algorithm’s people have long industry experience which significantly enhances their consultative value. He explains, “As we worked together, their consultant Dennis spotted some shortcomings in our operations and advised us. We’ve taken his advice on financial aspects as well as operations. They weren’t there to just deploy the software and leave. They were invested in seeing our company do better. Can’t say I’ve seen other consultants do that.” Trent also had high praise for Algorithm’s project manager, Mimi. Speaking plainly he smiles and says, “She’s no BS. Let’s get it done. Have her kick our butts. What an asset to have her there!”

He adds that Algorithm will most definitely be his consultant for their upcoming CRM deployment.



# Algorithm

Algorithm stops at nothing to make their customers successful. In a time of self-help, they are accessible and always a phone call or email away, especially with flawless implementation methods, custom applications, process evaluation, upgrades, tools & add-ons, cloud services, customer support, network & IT support and warehouse management.

To learn more, or even if you have a quick question, contact the Algorithm Solutions Team for a no-obligation insightful and immediate response.

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