

Bee Valve Goes from Spreadsheets to Cloud ERP with Acumatica

OVERVIEW

When Jim and Hallie Stewart acquired Bee Valve and its sister companies in 2022, they took on a respected fluid handling manufacturer with a long record of innovation, plus two campuses, four companies, and almost no usable systems. A legacy Macola installation handled only accounts receivable and payable, and everything else lived on paper and in spreadsheets. Working with Algorithm, the Stewarts and a small, determined core team implemented Acumatica Cloud ERP, built their processes from the ground up, and brought every company under Black Tip LLC onto one connected platform.

KEY RESULTS

- Replaced a barely used legacy system and a sprawl of disconnected spreadsheets with a single, cloud-based Acumatica ERP
- Unified four companies across two campuses on one platform with shared, consistent data
- Tracked inventory and production in a system for the first time in the company's history
- Consolidated duplicate vendor and customer records before import for a clean start on day one
- Trained in-house super users who designed the workflows and now train their colleagues
- Created an 80 to 90 page process binder covering every task, both in and out of the system
- Enabled cross-training so employees can support whichever company needs help on a given day
- Gained visibility into activity that was previously invisible, such as open quotes needing follow-up
- Went live on June 11, 2024, after a roughly one-year implementation, and kept building from there with new dashboards and workflows

4

companies
brought onto one
platform

2

campuses
connected

85%

of office staff were
temps at
acquisition

~1 yr

from discovery to
Go-Live

**BEE VALVE INC.**

COMPANY

Bee Valve Inc., a Black Tip LLC
company
beevalve.com

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing: fluid handling components, including ball valves, couplers, adapters, strainers, and fittings for agriculture, irrigation, and industrial markets

BLACK TIP FAMILY

Bee Valve, CableTek Wiring Products, Pioneer Products, and Plastic Enterprises

LOCATION

Elyria, Ohio, with operations across two campuses

GO-LIVE

June 11, 2024

PRODUCTS

Acumatica Cloud ERP with StarShip shipping integration

PARTNER

**Algorithm**

algorithminc.com

**Acumatica**
The Cloud ERP

CHALLENGES

A Business Worth Rebuilding

Jim Stewart, a seasoned business owner with a strong understanding of manufacturing, first heard Bee Valve was for sale through a colleague whose father had supervised at the company for more than 40 years. Jim already knew the operation firsthand: he had done repair work for the company after a roof collapse. That experience showed him both its strengths and its unrealized potential, and with Hallie's full support, the couple decided to buy the business.

Bee Valve had a proud history. In the early 1970s it led the industry by developing non-metallic hose couplers and adapters made from glass-reinforced nylon and polypropylene, products that offered both economy and strength. Today its components move water for agricultural irrigation and many other applications. Its sister companies round out the Black Tip family: CableTek makes fiber and cable management products, such as the gray utility box outside a home and the raceway that runs along a wall, while Plastic Enterprises handles contract plastic injection molding across town.

People First

The biggest challenge was not the facilities. It was the workplace. About 85 percent of office staff and most of the production floor were temporary employees, and the previous owners took a hands-off approach, largely coming in to handle paperwork. That philosophy was very different from the Stewarts' vision. "We saw a lot of potential. We really liked the products and believed in what the business could become," says Hallie Stewart, CEO of Black Tip LLC.

The Stewarts leaned on their network, bringing in trusted friends and family, including their high school and college-aged children. Two longtime friends took on key leadership roles: Lisa, a retired social worker, stepped in to lead HR and ERP integration, and Sheri became CFO. Neither had prior experience with ERP systems or manufacturing, and both quickly became critical to the turnaround.

Four Companies, Two Campuses, No Common Ground

Each company under Black Tip had operated as its own entity, and the teams barely knew each other. CableTek employees worked at the back of the building and rarely spoke with Bee Valve staff at the front. Hallie worked with employees to define core values, celebrate achievements, and redefine roles around teamwork. Lisa spent a year simply helping people get to know one another, moved CableTek up front, and launched cross-training so people could support whichever company needed help that day. All of this happened alongside a one-year ERP implementation and a massive clean-out of filing cabinets.

IN THEIR WORDS

"We saw a lot of potential. We really liked the products and believed in what the business could become."

Hallie Stewart
CEO, Black Tip LLC



Bee Valve fluid handling components serve agriculture, irrigation, and industrial markets.



Jim Stewart
President

Spreadsheets, Spreadsheets, and More Spreadsheets

Nearly everything was done on paper. Macola was used only for accounts receivable and payable. There was no inventory or production tracking, no one had been trained on the system, and the company relied on an occasional outside consultant. Most information lived in spreadsheets, and no one could be sure which versions were current or correct. Each of the four companies kept its own data, and because several shared the same vendors, duplicate records piled up. Product was trucked between buildings and handled again and again. It was time for a different approach.

SOLUTION

A Guide They Could Trust

Jim had lived through a failed ERP implementation at a previous business, so choosing the right partner mattered. The Stewarts selected Algorithm to implement Acumatica Cloud ERP, and Algorithm assigned Senior Consultant Andy Smith and consultant Kristin Christian to lead discovery. The difference was immediate. The team felt that a large vendor with a generic approach would not have known what to do with a business as unusual as theirs, and they would not have known which questions to ask. Andy and Kristin brought the experience to recommend the best option, and the patience to explain why.

"They truly listened, understood what wasn't intuitive to us, and provided clear, confident guidance," says Hallie. "The discovery phase was eye-opening, not just for us, but for them, as they saw how tangled our old processes were. They approached it with calm expertise, helping us transition smoothly from outdated spreadsheets to a modern ERP system."

Building the System, Not Just Learning It

As end-user training approached, a team member in accounts payable asked a fair question: "How are you going to teach me this in two weeks when you've been learning it for months?" What she didn't realize was that the super users weren't just learning Acumatica. They were building it. With no existing structure to copy, the core team defined workflows, decided what was needed and what wasn't, and shaped the system to fit the way the business really worked.

"Andy and Kristin were masterful in guiding us through this process," says Lisa. "They didn't just tell us what to do, they asked the right questions. They'd challenge us: 'Is that really how you want this to work?' or 'Let's run through this scenario and see if it makes sense.' Sometimes we'd think we had the right setup, test it, and realize it wasn't right. Then we'd adjust and refine."

FROM THE ALGORITHM TEAM

"This core team, their leaders, were super strong, smart, and dedicated. They spent nights and weekends. They hadn't used an ERP system before, so they had to learn it and then figure out how to change the culture in the company to make it work."

Andy Smith

Senior Consultant, Algorithm



Black Tip LLC brought four companies onto one Acumatica platform.

Clean Data from Day One

Rather than moving old problems into a new system, the team restructured its master data around future needs. Working in Excel, they meticulously reviewed and consolidated records, bringing together vendors and customers that had previously existed under multiple names across the four companies. The result was a well-organized, clean data import and a single, trusted source of truth.

BENEFITS

One System for Four Companies

Acumatica now connects every company under Black Tip, so the business runs on shared, reliable data instead of scattered spreadsheets. "If we didn't do the Acumatica, I don't even know how we would function now," Hallie says. The new visibility has changed expectations, too. Work that once went unseen is now in the open, and the team uses the system to spot what needs attention, such as a backlog of open quotes that surfaced once quoting moved into Acumatica.

Empowered Employees

Before the project, employees did much of the work but were rarely given a voice, encouraged to ask questions, or invited to shape how things were done. That changed. A few months in, team member Brandy said, "This is the most fun I've ever had at work." She was part of the team, problem-solving and contributing rather than just following instructions.

"Andy and Kristin played a huge role in that transformation," says Hallie. "They didn't just train our team, they engaged them, showing them the possibilities of what the system could do. People were amazed, realizing what was possible, and getting excited about making their work better."

Documentation as a Discipline

Before Acumatica, almost nothing was written down. Today the team maintains a process binder of 80 to 90 pages that covers how each task is done in the system and on the floor, from packing in Acumatica to shipping through StarShip. That discipline lets people share responsibilities, collaborate, and move into roles they prefer. It also speeds onboarding: a new sales manager with prior ERP experience was working on his own after a two-hour session.

IN THEIR WORDS

"Watching the team come together and do it, it was magical. There's no reason they had to. They could have just quit, but they all got into it."

Hallie Stewart
CEO, Black Tip LLC



The Go-Live cake honored the "Acumatica Dream Team."



Food trucks helped the whole company celebrate Go-Live day.

A Go-Live Worth Celebrating

On June 11, 2024, the Stewarts, Lisa, and Sheri threw a company-wide celebration with food trucks, cake, and creative awards for the team. Andy and Kristin were part of it, too, receiving the "Steady Eddy" and "Save the Day" awards for their roles in the implementation.

Always Getting Better

The team continues to push for more. When a sales rep recently asked for a dashboard showing specific information, the super users called Algorithm and had it in place by the end of the week. Follow-up sessions with Andy and Kristin help the team learn what to monitor in the system, and employees are already gearing up for the next Acumatica update. "We have a strong desire to keep getting better," says Hallie, "and I think that makes our team unique."

THE TAKEAWAY

Bee Valve's journey from outdated processes to a cohesive, empowered team shows what's possible when visionary leadership, the right technology, and a culture of collaboration come together.



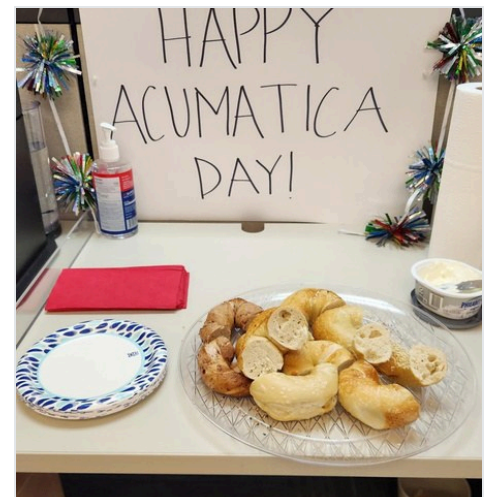
Algorithm

For over 30 years, Algorithm has served America's manufacturers and distributors. Customers value Algorithm's deep industry and software knowledge and its experienced team of advisors, consultants, engineers, and business professionals, each holding the highest-level Acumatica partner certifications. Algorithm combines best practices with a documented implementation methodology covering cloud services, the networks and devices used to access them, improvement and customization services, and the ongoing support needed to maximize customer success.

Contact the Algorithm Solutions Team at info@algorithminc.com or 888-522-8588, or visit algorithminc.com.



Algorithm's Andy Smith and Kristin Christian received the "Steady Eddy" and "Save the Day" awards at Go-Live.



Happy Acumatica Day!