



Customer Profile

Avedis Zildjian gets better financial data faster with Infor F9



Facts at a glance

Product: Infor F9, Infor SyteLine

Industry: General Manufacturing/
Metal Fabrication

Country: USA

“Infor F9’s key strength is its ability to change as our business needs change.”

**—Glen Cobbett, Director of Finance,
Avedis Zildjian**

About the company

Avedis Zildjian was an Armenian alchemist in Constantinople in the early seventeenth century. While attempting to create gold by combining base metals, he discovered an alloy of copper, tin, and traces of silver with unique sound qualities. In 1618, Avedis used his secret alloy to create cymbals of spectacular clarity and power. As Avedis' reputation grew, the Sultan gave him the name "Zildjian" in Armenian, a word meaning "son of cymbal maker." That same business is now nearly four centuries old and has been passed down to Zildjian heirs for 15 generations. Relocating to America in 1929, Avedis Zildjian III moved the factory to Massachusetts. Today, Avedis III's two granddaughters continue the family tradition in what is recognized as the oldest family-owned business in America. The company's products are used by acclaimed musicians worldwide, and most recently were featured in the soundtracks for the Harry Potter movie series. Learn more at www.zildjian.com.

Setting the strategy

At first glance, one might expect a cymbal manufacturer founded in Constantinople in the early 17th century to be more concerned about preserving time-honored traditions than exploring new technologies, but The Avedis Zildjian Company, Inc., based today in Norwell, Massachusetts, has found a way to blend old and new successfully—and wouldn't have it any other way.

“Avedis Zildjian was an \$18M company with a three-person finance department when I started working here in 1993,” said Glen Cobbett, director of finance. “Eighteen years later we are a \$50M company with a four-person finance department. Zildjian stays competitive by managing costs, and Infor™ F9 is one of the tools we use to help manage those costs.”

Getting business specific

For Zildjian, Infor F9's key benefit is all about providing better data faster to the people who need it. That's especially important today as metal prices soar and competition increases in the music industry. Infor F9 links General Ledger data from Infor SyteLine, Zildjian's ERP system, to Microsoft Excel for fast, flexible reports that are “quick gets” for company executives.

“The ROI has really been in time savings,” Cobbett said. “Preparing monthly financial reports literally takes minutes with Infor F9—giving us more time to analyze the data in the reports. The Excel interface allows the finance department to quickly retrieve financial data from our accounting system and then forward the information to other departments for further analysis.”

According to Cobbett, most executives at Zildjian were familiar with Excel spreadsheets, so their response to Infor F9 was extremely positive. “They not only can see the data quickly, but also can work with it. That is a great benefit. And they appreciate the reports in Infor F9's electronic format rather than receiving them in bulky paper spreadsheets.”

In addition, audit and tax schedule preparation is no longer a time-consuming task. Cobbett's finance group has become more self-sufficient. "We no longer require time and assistance from the IT department to complete the monthly financial reports," he said.

Zildjian purchased F9 in 2002 to interface with the accounting software it was using at the time. In 2007, the company switched to Microsoft FRx when it migrated to Infor SyteLine as its ERP system, but it returned to F9 in 2009 when Microsoft discontinued the FRx product. According to Cobbett, it was exactly the right move.

"Infor F9's key strength is its ability to change as our business needs change. It would take days to update the SyteLine financial reports each time we added a new product line or changed reporting relationships. Updating Infor F9 is as easy as adding a row or changing a formula in Excel."

Seeing results

Cobbett appreciates Infor F9's to track statistical units such as products sold by region and average pricing costs.

"SyteLine allows us to establish statistical accounts, but the information is not included in the General Ledger," he said. "When we upload the SyteLine data to Infor F9, the system pulls the statistical information along with GL. So we can show not only sales dollars but sales units. It's a great tool for us to quickly and easily see how we are performing in any given region with any given product."

Cobbett described some of his favorite Infor F9 features that enable this type of analysis: "I can retrieve account activity for specific accounts and fiscal periods using the CHART function with a combination of account ranges and wildcards. I also use the CHART function to quickly generate a trial balance in Excel. I use the BSPEC function to summarize data in a table format within Excel."

For example, he uses BSPEC to create a sales revenue spreadsheet that lists Zildjian's product lines in rows and sales regions across the top. A reader can quickly see total sales by product line by looking at the totals in the last column, or see total sales for a region by looking at the last row.

He also appreciates Infor F9's drilldown features, a real differentiator that enables tracing of numbers back to their origins with the click of a mouse. If Cobbett has a question about any number in a financial report or budget, he can drill down for details quickly and easily, analyzing any balance by the various account code segments or by the general ledger transactions that created it.

Doing business better

Zildjian implemented Infor F9 in approximately three weeks and was one of the first companies to use it with the SyteLine system. "Infor F9 requires no maintenance once the initial setup is complete. We have scheduled it to update automatically every night, so the Infor F9 data tables and the SyteLine data tables are always in sync."

Infor F9's ability to handle multi-company reporting is another benefit as Zildjian grows. With Zildjian's merger in late 2010 with Vic Firth, a leading drumstick manufacturer, Infor F9 will enable the two companies to produce consolidated financial statements automatically once Firth is set up with the ERP system and Infor F9 for financial reporting.

"Today, I spend a day and a half doing the consolidated balance at the end of each quarter," said Cobbett. "But when the systems are set up in the near future, I will be able to do the entire package in much less time. And with Infor F9's ease of use, training Vic Firth in the system should be easy, too."



641 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011
800-260-2640
infor.com

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