

# Advance Engineered Products

Looking to bring their business into the future, Epicor ERP and Six S Partners helped them do it.

## About the Company

- Location: Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
- Services: engineering, designing, manufacturing, and repairing tank truck and trailer equipment
- Website: <http://www.advanceengineeredproducts.com/>

*“When oil went down, our order book dropped off, and we knew we had to adapt to survive. We invested \$250,000 in SAP and found that it still lacked functionality. We had spreadsheets upon spreadsheets of information, but without the enterprise data being accessible we were faced with a real challenge. SAP worked for us in the 90’s, but times change and we knew ERP was the way forward for our company.”*

Graeme Ross – IT Director



## Challenges

- The success of AEPL, as with others in trucking, is largely dependent on the performance of the oil industry. AEPL needed to minimize costs, maximize efficiency and profitability, and enable their business to be as flexible as possible to adapt to boom-or-bust conditions.
- Many other ERP providers were targeted toward massive organizations, and simply didn't speak AEPL's language. Six S Partners took the unique challenges a mid-sized organization faces into consideration during their ERP implementation, resulting in a painless process.

## Our Solution

- Dramatically reduced consulting expenses
- Epicor ERP experience designed to cater to a mid-sized business like AEPL
- Integration of manufacturing and service systems to streamline data and keep departments on the same page
- Adaptable, accessible software that continues to provide unforeseen benefits
- Transparency and honesty rather than price-gouging



# Advance Engineered Products



**ADVANCE**  
ENGINEERED PRODUCTS GROUP

Serving North America since 1984, AEPL is Canada's leader in truck tank and trailer manufacturing and service. AEPL's foundation saw a small group of investors come together with hopes of accomplishing a common goal--to build state-of-the-art truck tanks and trailers. With the purchase of their Regina manufacturing facility, equipped with overhead cranes and an industrial power supply, the vision of Advance Engineered Products Group was realized. Today, AEPL designs, engineers, manufactures and services tank trucks, trailers, and vacuum truck equipment and is registered with the Department of Transportation in the United States and Canada, and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

## Increased Efficiency

### Increased efficiency and flexibility with Epicor ERP

For a mid-sized trucking business, the ability to scale up or down to meet industry needs can be make-or-break. AEPL was looking for a software provider that would enable them to be dynamic, and Epicor ERP helped to facilitate this.

When trailer demand increased, AEPL began to leverage their service centers for manufacturing, which saw them send parts to and from the service center to accommodate for increased demand. As a result, AEPL often ran into logistical issues resulting in loss of parts, missed delivery schedules, and subsequently "plenty of pointing fingers." With Epicor, AEPL has been able to maximize efficiency at their primary manufacturing facility in Regina.

As a result, manufacturing work that originally required two shifts to complete now only takes a single shift due to Epicor ERP's contributions toward streamlining AEPL's business. Fewer parts lost, more on-time deliveries, and decreased labor costs--all thanks to Epicor.



## Looking Forward

### After 30 years in the industry, AEPL looks forward

In the years since its foundation, AEPL has continued to adapt and evolve with the times in order to provide the best possible product to customers. A mid-sized company staking its own business on the performance of the oil industry, AEPL needs flexibility and agility not just to thrive, but to survive. Unable to pivot quickly to match demand due to underperforming software, AEPL's order book took a hit when oil dipped.

In 2015 when the company went up for sale, nearly every prospective buyer noted AEPL's non-functional ERP--despite a \$250,000 investment in SAP software and consulting. To bring the company into the modern age and propel it into the future, AEPL sought out an ERP better suited to their business. A formal selection process was initiated and the company's key stakeholders were surveyed to determine what each felt the business needed in a software product. 12 systems were narrowed down to five after an initial RFI, then those five systems became three. Ultimately, after a conference room pilot with each, it was Epicor ERP that met the needs beset by each stakeholder.

These needs were simple, or so it seems. The new ERP needed to blend manufacturing systems as well as service systems so that each of AEPL's departments had access to key data. While there are many providers that offer manufacturing and service systems separately, Epicor was the only provider on AEPL's list that seamlessly integrated the two. AEPL's choice was clear.



**EPICOR**

# Advance Engineered Products



*“It’s dangerous to say that one system will do everything, but not one person on my team has been disappointed by Epicor or Six S Partners’ implementation. Their understanding of the challenges an organization of our size faces has been a huge help.”*

## An Implementer

### An implementer that speaks the same language

AEPL had been burned by their previous software provider, resulting in maxed-out consulting budgets with very little to show for it. The team at AEPL could tell that the Epicor ERP experience was going to be completely different from what they were accustomed to from very early on. “Six S Partners was unique in that they were the only implementer we worked with, so we felt like we were being sold a solution rather than just a piece of software,” recalls AEPL’s (need name and title), and, even with this comprehensive implementation, AEPL’s consulting budget went largely unused.

In fact, the handful of consultants kept on hand in the SAP days was reduced to one core operational consultant and one for finance with Six S Partners, largely due to the level of attention paid to getting the AEPL team comfortable with Epicor. As opposed to SAP, “the Six S Partners team wasn’t keeping the secrets, they were instead focused on getting us going on our own and comfortable with the system far prior to our live-date.”

Lowered costs for a more well-rounded service was just the beginning. In AEPL’s experience, communicating their needs to software companies was a pain-point. SAP, geared toward larger organizations, often seemed like they weren’t speaking the same language as the team at AEPL.

Epicor and Six S Partners, on the other hand, both made it a point to understand the unique struggles that a mid-sized company like AEPL faced, and continued to tailor solutions to combat them. “Epicor is targeted to users of our size. Six S Partners is the same way, and it was a great benefit to be able to communicate with both an implementer and a software group that understood our struggles.” Desire to find a common cause in AEPL’s successful ERP implementation is what really allowed Six S Partners to stand out.

## Key Improvements

### Key improvements from Epicor and Six S Partners

While AEPL continues to discover unforeseen advantages of Epicor ERP as they add new modules and expand the software’s capabilities, AEPL saw some immediate improvements following their implementation.

- AEPL’s choice of Six S Partners as their Epicor implementer resulted in significant reduction in consulting costs, with six consultants becoming just two. Six S Partners Deep operational experience and ERP knowledge was a key factor.
- Integration of both their manufacturing and service systems using Epicor has resulted in greater company synergy.
- Increased capabilities with Epicor ERP over AEPL’s previous software provider.
- ERP has maximized the efficiency of AEPL’s production and service departments, affording users the ability to track how products are being made and serviced.
- Dynamic, continuously improving software presents the opportunity for AEPL’s expansion into new product categories.
- Enhanced flexibility to ebb and flow as both the trucking and oil industries change.
- Improving the way service centers operate by leveraging Epicor ERP’s manufacturing execution system to place data collection terminals on shop floors.



# Advance Engineered Products

## Takeaways

### Advance Engineered Products Group's primary takeaways

- The importance of a thorough selection process can not be overstated. Every single key shareholder had an equal voice on the hunt for a new software provider, and AEPL's decision was based on the software that met every need.
- An implementer that understands your needs is crucial. While larger businesses may need larger implementers, AEPL, Epicor, and Six S Partners—all mid-sized companies—were a perfect match.
- A permanent, in-house project team can be the secret to success. "Having a group of in-house Epicor specialists has been great for our company."
- Implementation can be a year-long project if it is done right, and should not be rushed. Having both a team and an implementer that understand and appreciate that is vital.
- Flexibility is key. Epicor is dynamic, and it is fully customizable. "The flexibility of Epicor allows us to do things that other software companies would likely try and sell a separate 3rd party add on product for."
- The relationship with Epicor and Six S Partners is ongoing. "We recently finished a value exchange workshop (VEW) with Six S Partners and Epicor to evaluate what more we can do with the software. We've added several modules to Epicor and even eliminated some that we've found that we don't need after all."



## About Epicor

With 40 years of experience, Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader in business software solutions. Serving the retail, manufacturing, distribution, and service industries, Epicor's client base comprises 20,000 customers across 150 countries. For more information, visit [epicor.com](http://epicor.com)

## About Six S Partners

Headquartered in Waterloo, Ontario, with strategic locations across the US and Canada, Six S Partners is a full-service ERP training and consulting firm with a specific expertise in Epicor. As an Certified, Epicor Platinum Partner, they possess a deep knowledge of Epicor's solutions and are skilled in successful ERP implementations. Providing solutions to mid-size manufacturing, distribution, and service organizations, Six S Partners is thoroughly invested in the long-term success of its implementation clients. For more information, visit [sixspartners.com](http://sixspartners.com).

