SUCCESS STORY

Jones Homes USA
www.joneshomesusa.com

LOCATION:
Orlando, Florida

INDUSTRY:
Residential Construction

BUSINESS CHALLENGES:

- The business needed a single platform solution that could support all its workers, all its vendors, and scale to enable dramatic growth.
- The company wanted software made for homebuilders, not something that would have to be customized over time for their specific needs.
- Subcontractors needed easy access to the daily information flow including scheduling, purchase orders, and payments.

BENEFITS OF SWITCHING TO THE CLOUD:

- With MarkSystems, all modules work together seamlessly, enabling internal workers and external vendors to work collaboratively and efficiently, with no wasted time or effort.
- The cloud-based model enables the company to expand with the modules it needs, without the major one-time expenses associated with traditional software/hardware models.
- MarkSystems was engineered by builders, for builders, so it is designed to maximize the operational efficiency and performance of home builders.

MarkSystems® ERP software supports major growth surge at Jones Homes USA

Question: How do you take a start-up operation without a contract to its name and turn it into a homebuilding dynamo that posts over 400 closings annually in just three years? Just as important, how do you do all of that without creating major cash flow problems for the business and driving you and the people you work with to the breaking point?

Olaf Nillies knows the answers to these questions. As vice president of purchasing at Orlando-based Jones Homes USA, he has played a key role in accomplishing these objectives—and then some!

EXPLOSIVE GROWTH WAS INEVITABLE, BECAUSE OF STRONG LEADERSHIP

Part of the explanation for the company's remarkable growth since its founding in 2015 is its veteran management team. Nillies, with 20 years in the homebuilding business himself, is part of a group whose members built thousands of homes before their current company opened its doors.

It helps too that as a subsidiary of the Emerson Group, Jones Homes can draw on the resources of one of the world's leading international real estate development companies, with operations in the United Kingdom and Portugal, in addition to its Florida-based business.

ERP SOFTWARE TO FUEL THAT GROWTH WOULD PROVE INDISPENSABLE

Just as important is the company's use from day one of the homebuilding industry's leading business management software, MarkSystems from ECi Software Solutions.

Finding the right program to run your business is one of the biggest tasks any start-up faces, but as Nillies makes clear, choosing MarkSystems was an easy call.

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>
> — OLAF NILLIES

"It didn't take long to realize going with MarkSystems made a lot of sense for us," Nillies remembers. "We talked with some of our friends in the industry who were already using MarkSystems and they gave us a very positive introduction to the program. We also had the chance to get a live presentation and everything we saw and heard made it clear that MarkSystems would be a good choice for us."

SINGLE DATA ENTRY ENABLES DATA TO FLOW SEAMLESSLY TO ALL EMPLOYEES AND VENDORS

Part of the reason for that call is that MarkSystems is software designed specifically for homebuilders, by homebuilders. What also got Nillies' attention was its powerful, one-stop-shop architecture.

"The strongest aspect of MarkSystems from our perspective is that it's all on a single platform," he explains. "With MarkSystems, you're not bringing in one main hub and then purchasing individual modules and hoping you'll be able to make them all talk to each other. It doesn't matter where you're working in the business—accounting, purchasing, construction, or whatever—all the data flows through the system and it's available to every department in real-time."

THE RESULT: RELIABLE, TIMELY, EASY ACCESS TO CRITICAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

Even better, users don't need to switch in and out of programs to get the job done or put up with time-consuming, error-prone duplicate data entry. And MarkSystems' status as a cloud-based program means that information is available 24/7 to anyone with an internet connection, regardless of where they are working.

Once the decision to use MarkSystems was made, implementation at Jones Homes went very well, Nillies reports. "The MarkSystems team came by and within 48 hours, we had the main skeleton built and the rest of the program followed quickly," he reports.

OLAF NILLIES
VICE PRESIDENT OF PURCHASING, JONES HOMES USA

SCALABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY WAS IMPERATIVE TO FUEL DRAMATIC BUSINESS GROWTH

For any growth-oriented company, the scalability of the software is a key consideration in the evaluation process. MarkSystems' performance at Jones Homes over the past three years could not provide better evidence of its strengths in that area.

The numbers speak for themselves. "We opened for business in July 2015 and by the end of that year, we had closed around 30 homes," Nillies remembers. "In 2018, we will surpass 400 closings, and if everything works out the way we think it will, we have the potential to nearly double that rate over the next two years."

MarkSystems has had no problem handling growth on that scale. "The majority of our people today use MarkSystems on a daily basis," Nillies says. "Everybody in accounting, purchasing, construction, sales, customer service, and our design studio is using MarkSystems. The feedback we get is almost universally positive," he reports happily.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY EQUATES TO GREATER COLLABORATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

And what if Jones Homes didn't have MarkSystems to run the business? "We're closing over 400 homes a year with 60

ECI|MarkSystems®

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employees. Without MarkSystems, our headcount would probably be twice as much," he says.

When Nillies looks at MarkSystems, he sees a resource for the company whose benefits extend beyond just the program's features and functionality. "We want to make Jones Homes as attractive as possible, not just for our own employees, but for the subcontractors and other suppliers we work with on a daily basis," he points out. "Working both with us and for us needs to be as easy and as transparent as possible. MarkSystems plays a key role in creating that kind of environment."

Most new hires, he explains, need little more than a 2-3 hour introduction to the system and another session on the modules they'll be using to get them up and running. Subcontractors appreciate the easy access they have to the daily information flow including scheduling, purchase orders, and payments. This enables them to focus on what's really important to their job, rather than wasting valuable time trying to track down the project details they need.

"We get very positive feedback from our subcontractors on MarkSystems' Internet ToolKit (ITK)," Nillies reports. "Many of our vendors really appreciate the fact that with MarkSystems, all the job documentation— including plans, options, and color selections—is stored in one place and is so easily accessible."

 After twenty years in the business, Olaf Nillies has seen too many instances where builders end up having to work in spite of the software instead of using what it offers to run smoothly and efficiently. For him and the rest of the Jones Homes team, that's not even an issue.

"We need an IT platform that serves the user, rather than the other way around, and that's what we have with MarkSystems," he says. "It's done a very good job for us over the past three years and it looks well-set to keep doing just that for many years to come."