

SHIMS SPOTLIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH
SCOTT KIRKLAND
AT DUFF COMPANY



SCOTT KIRKLAND
CONTROLLER, DUFF COMPANY

WE RECENTLY SAT DOWN
WITH SCOTT KIRKLAND,
CONTROLLER AT DUFF
COMPANY, TO ASK
ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE
PARTNERING WITH ZUMASYS
TO SUPPORT SHIMS.

DUFF co.

SHIMS User Partners with Zumasys to Complete Migration

Tell me about your job. What does Duff Company do?

I'm the Controller at Duff Company, and I've been in this role for a little over nine years. Duff Company is a wholesale plumbing, pump, water softener, and multi-family housing supply distributor. We're located in Norristown, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia.

How long has Duff Company been using SHIMS?

Back in the early 80s, the company's leadership began looking for an ERP system that could be used for running the business and keeping track of inventory. We decided on SHIMS, and we've been using it ever since.

What led you to consider Zumasys?

The company that owned SHIMS decided to sunset the development of the product and offer limited support. This was their way to try and force users to buy a different product that they considered their flagship offering. Most SHIMS users did not want that, so in partnership with 80 other companies, we continued with a tight-knit group called the SHIMS Wholesalers Association (SWA). The group was originally founded as a user group to help direct the development of the product. Today it is a user group of companies that continue to use SHIMS and find ways to improve and modify it without having a company developing it or supporting it.

At Duff Company, we felt like we were spending too much money with our old SHIMS provider and not getting a lot of support. Duff, along with all the other companies in the SWA, was looking for a partner that could help us continue to use the product while modifying it to meet today's needs. We had spent a lot of time and resources developing our products based on SHIMS and we did not want to invest a lot into starting the process all over with another software product that did not meet our needs.

Duff Company had an older server that was coming to the end of its useful life. Knowing that we were going to have to get new equipment, we reached out to Zumasys. We met Bruce Decker and Dave McCary at a SWA Conference in Philadelphia a few years back, and we liked the people at Zumasys. We ended up deciding that it would be a good fit for Zumasys to provide us the equipment.

We went through an evaluation for having an in-house server versus cloud, and at that time, we decided it would be best for us to go in-house. In the middle of all this decision making, our server crashed a couple of times, so we decided to accelerate our plans with Zumasys, and they rescheduled their workload to accommodate us.

Our goal was to get through the end of the year and close the year on the old server, then get the new server in place as quickly as possible. Zumasys was instrumental in doing that for us and making sure that we did not have any critical issues. The Zumasys team made sure that we maintained operations while migrating to Linux from AIX so we could get up and running very quickly. In addition to providing support, Zumasys also gave us documentation on operating the new servers using CUPS to manage our account, add new users, manage existing users, make modifications to printers, and so-on. They helped us convert all of our printers to network printers during the migration because we were still using serial green-bar printers.

Have you noticed a difference in your SHIMS performance since switching to Zumasys?

There are speed benefits for sure. Doing backup on tape drives would take four to six hours. When we did the backup the first time, we thought we did something wrong because it took less than ten minutes. Same thing with our monthly close. On our old platform, our monthly close took 45 minutes to an hour, but today we can close out our payables and receivables in just 5 minutes. We couldn't believe it.

We also enjoy a faster turnaround on support than we did before. With our software, there are independent programmers that do a lot of modifications and customizations for us to meet our business needs. Zumasys' programmers and MultiValue experts understand that, and they support us as opposed to saying, "Well you modified it, so it's not really our responsibility to help you fix it or support it." Zumasys does the fixes for us in a reasonable amount of time at a reasonable cost, which is what we as a business like.

What do you like most about working with Zumasys?

With Zumasys, I feel like we have a business partnership, not just a vendor/customer relationship. I feel that we are partners working on a common goal, which for Zumasys is to keep our ERP running and for us is to run our business. When we went to Zumapalooza – their bi-annual user conference – it became clear that Zumasys is about more than just business. In fact, there are a ton of other things that business people should aspire to beyond rewarding themselves. Zumasys definitely demonstrates this.

This year, we held the SWA Spring Meeting at Zumapalooza in Las Vegas, and it was the second-highest attended SHIMS event in the nine years that I've been associated with the group. For a long time, SHIMS users felt like we were out of place—now we feel like we have a home.



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