



WESCO *delivers* for Borders | A Case History

Borders Books and WR Controls Write a New Chapter on Cost Savings

WESCO WR Controls is taking the mystery, suspense and drama out of meeting Borders Books' power and electrical control needs. Ann Arbor, Michigan-based Borders Books is one of the nation's leading book and music retailers with outlets across the country. With the custom-designed Integrated Facility System (IFS) package supplied by WR Controls, Borders is saving substantial wall space and installation cost in each of the 45-50 new stores it opens annually.





WR Controls provides Borders with an integrated system using advanced packaging technology, custom control solutions, state-of-the-art components, and Cutler-Hammer's industry-leading power distribution and control equipment. Pre-wired to Borders' specific needs, the units consume significantly less wall space than the retailer's former control equipment, and are installed in a fraction of the time and cost.

With WR Controls' comprehensive service and support, plus the factory assembled systems supplied by Cutler-Hammer, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Borders is:

- Reducing control equipment installation space requirements by 63 percent, lowering its overall electrical equipment costs
- Significantly reducing installation time and field labor costs
- Eliminating the cost of stocking and storage associated with individual equipment specification
- Providing each location with around the clock service and support

Key Success Factors

At the heart of the successful relationship between Borders and WR Controls is their ability to work as partners. This has led to a collaborative approach in developing solutions to equipment needs as well as interaction on business issues. That relationship, combined with WR Controls' expertise and experience in serving multi-site commercial and retail outlets, enables Borders to benefit from:

- Replacing traditional equipment with a smaller, pre-assembled unit from a sole supplier
- WR Controls' power distribution and electrical control application skills

- WR Controls' ability to build a relationship with Borders' employees and support their established programs and procedures with customized solutions
- WESCO's proven procurement solutions that provide total supply chain cost reductions and process improvements
- Cutler-Hammer's dedicated resources tailored to meet the needs of retail facilities

A History of Space and Cost Savings at Borders

Three years ago, Borders' experience with its lighting and electrical equipment supplier was plagued with sporadic deliveries and inconsistency in its electrical distribution equipment. Borders' Director, Store Services, Barry Strzala, explains, "We needed a vendor that would actually deliver on its promises. We'd had many suppliers come in and offer us assurance of solutions that would be better, faster, and cheaper. Unfortunately, in most cases, these strong sales presentations were not supported by equally strong service efforts. As we began investigating alternatives, we learned of WR Controls offering from another satisfied customer. Based on that recommendation, I set up a meeting with WR Controls' President, Mike Wise.

"We wanted to work with a company that actually did what it promised and also demonstrated that it offered us greater value than other suppliers. From Mike's thorough approach of assessing our needs, plus the questions he asked, I knew that WR Controls would help us make a difference in how we were doing things. His focus was on meeting customer-based needs, unlike other vendors who stressed their products' performance in an effort to sell us equipment."

WR Controls Determines Borders' Actual Power Needs

Strzala asked Wise to make a presentation to a group of Borders architects and construction managers responsible for vendor selection and project implementation. In meeting with the group, Wise spread out the plans from eight different Borders stores and pointed out that their equipment installations weren't standardized. He also demonstrated that the installations were not based on the store's specific power needs.

The current design occupied 30 linear feet of wall space in the rear of the store. In addition, all the panels had to be mounted and wired by the on-site contractor. This not only required several days of labor, but also resulted in lack of installation consistency from store-to-store.

According to Strzala, "When Mike explained that our needs could be determined by examining a number of factors including store size and power requirements, we knew that he was working in our best interest. He compared what we were currently paying to what we should be paying. From the start, Mike acted as if he was a Borders' employee. He showed us how those factors could enable us to determine what was overcapacity and how we could determine what was a reasonable spares inventory. He even calculated the figures to prove the cost savings."

Wise and his engineering team then assessed Borders' actual power and electrical requirements. Next, they looked at how those needs could be met in ways that would maximize the selling or storage capacity of each store. WR Controls' goals were four-fold:

- Increase the efficiency and lower the cost of individual store construction

- Increase the efficiency of the chain's network expansion
- Increase the operational efficiency of individual and network operations
- Standardize on leading manufacturers and service providers
- Maximize the stocking storage space in each store

Wise reports, "Our objective was to give Borders a standard product that would work for every new store it built. By doing this, we could reduce the floor space needed to mount the equipment, minimize the material content of the electrical distribution equipment, lower the overall equipment cost, and contain associated labor installation charges.

We looked at the current plans and redesigned the equipment into one integrated switchboard that used only 11 linear feet of wall space. In addition, we pre-wired all the panelboards within the sections to reduce the contractor labor needed for installation. We built several other detail design features into the assemblage to make the installation easier for the contractor."

After several systems were shipped, Borders asked WR Controls to work with Creative Control Designs, its HVAC and lighting equipment supplier, to study the possibility of placing that equipment inside the IFS package. WR Controls configured Creative Control Designs' equipment to fit into the system without any increase in the size of the exterior package. This enabled Borders to gain an additional four linear feet of wall space, now being used for inventory.

The Borders Review: Service — The WR Controls Difference

Borders notes that while there is little difference in the electrical control equipment supplied by a number of vendors, there is a dramatic difference in the service, support, and engineering provided.

Strzala reports, "WR Controls clearly stands apart from other suppliers when it comes to service, support, and engineering. We saw that from the first meeting. Other vendors focused on what they could sell us, rather than how to help us meet our needs cost effectively.

When we saw how Mike and his team reviewed our situation, we knew that WR Controls' objective was to serve us, not sell us. Their approach set the tone for a relationship of trust, cooperation and communication between our two organizations.

"From an operational standpoint, the equipment performed to our expectations. WR Controls turned the delivery, cost and space saving, and service promises into realities. But one of the most important aspects of our relationship was our ability to work together.

"Borders can be a demanding customer. For vendors to successfully work with us, they must take the initiative to learn our business and how we operate. Then, they must integrate their products and services with our systems and procedures. By doing so, companies move from being mere vendors to actually being an extension of our organization. These are the kinds of relationships Borders has determined are the keys to our efficiency and profitability.

"WR Controls took the time to do all the right things that made it easy for us to do business with them."

Synergistic Strength: WR Controls, WESCO, and Cutler-Hammer

“With WR Controls as our sole supplier, we also benefit from the capabilities and strengths of WESCO International and Cutler-Hammer,” cites Strzala.

“While the three organizations work seamlessly to provide us what we need, it gives us tremendous confidence knowing that each of these companies is working with our best interests in mind. Their proven programs and systems deliver the kind of measurable benefits that genuinely add value to our operations.”

Since WR Controls is backed by WESCO International, the leading integrated electrical distributor in North America, customers like Borders benefit from WESCO’s national network of more than 330 branches delivering 60,000 products from over 6,000 leading manufacturers. This breadth and depth enables equipment needs to be met rapidly regardless of location. WESCO’s procurement systems provide customers total supply chain cost reductions and process improvements. Through this combination of products and value-added services, WESCO offers comprehensive and documented cost-effective solutions to meet Borders’ specific procurement needs.

The resources that Cutler-Hammer has dedicated to serving the retail/commercial market enables it to meet the unique needs of those facilities. At the company’s main switchboard manufacturing plant in Sumter, South Carolina, it has established a factory-within-a-factory to build equipment for the retail customers. Not only are their employees aware of the urgency of making committed dates, but they are also familiar with the equipment needs of retail customers. Cutler-Hammer’s ability to integrate additional system-critical components including transient voltage surge suppression, IQ metering, and transfer switches, enable it to offer more equipment performance advantages to the end user, often saving additional wall space.

Since Cutler-Hammer maintains information on regional utility variances, equipment arrives at the customer’s site in compliance with local requirements, eliminating the need for on-site modifications. To enable it to build and ship equipment to multi-location customers, Cutler-Hammer maintains 19 satellite manufacturing sites around the world.

Single Source Supply: A Reassuring Resource For Borders

Strzala states, “As a multi-location company, Borders needs to have confidence that its suppliers can respond immediately. We know that one phone call to WR Controls is all we need to make whenever we have an emergency. Again, this affords us a business efficiency and assures us that our needs will be met promptly. For individual store managers, this provides the comfort that they won’t be left to make numerous phone calls hoping that they can find someone to help them when there’s a problem. They not only know how to get help, but also know that their concerns will be handled promptly and their downtime will be minimized.

“WR Controls didn’t just solve the problems we were having with deliveries and equipment consistency. They helped us find the best solution for our needs. They continuously look for ways to improve their service and products, because they see themselves as an integral part of Borders.”

(For further information, contact Joe McDermott at 630-530-3391)

Call 412-454-2225 or visit our website: www.wescodist.com

WESCO is an industry-leading Fortune 500 distributor of MRO (maintenance, repair and operating) products and advanced integrated supply procurement outsourcing services headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. WESCO operates over 340 full service branches throughout North America and around the world. Major markets served by WESCO include commercial and industrial construction, industrial process and discrete manufacturers, large industrial OEMs (original equipment manufacturers), data communications, electrical utilities, and retail/commercial power and lighting controls.

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