Demand for printed circuit boards is at an all-time high, yet many American companies lack the manpower and expertise to source, negotiate, and manage relationships directly with the Chinese manufacturing companies that supply them. That’s where RedBoard Circuits comes in. The Phoenix, AZ company has built a highly-customized process to manage the importing of circuit boards from quote to delivery, offering its clients a turnkey and transparent experience. Supporting that unique process is a unique technology system built on the Quick Base platform. By replacing manual procedures with online automation, RedBoard streamlined operations, reduced errors, and maximized productivity – all of which helped the company generate $8 million in sales with a staff of only four employees.

**The Challenge**

- Slow, inaccurate manual quote process
- Unreliable communication between US and Chinese manufacturers
- Lack of unified system for quotes and orders led to process inefficiency
- No way to share real-time data with clients and manufacturing partners

**The Solution**

- Quick Base app for managing quotes and orders in one system
- Database functionality automates manual tasks and actions
- Sales tracking shows profitability of orders
- Online access provides real-time updates to order status

**The Results**

- $8 million in sales without increasing staff
- Eliminated 100% of emails needed to obtain manufacturing quotes
Managing a Process from Here to China

RedBoard Circuits is an importer of printed circuit boards (PCBs) to OEMs and contract manufacturers in the United States. It’s a rapidly growing business that juggles offshore manufacturing partners and complex customer requirements to produce high-quality yet competitively priced PCBs for gaming, medical, and technology applications.

The company provides its customers with a wide range of PCB technology and can deliver PCBs within 48 hours. But with its small staff of four full-time employees processing more than 100 orders per month, automation became a mission-critical initiative.

Among the challenges, RedBoard needed to improve the accuracy of the quotes it was receiving from offshore manufacturing partners - and manual data entry of specifications and a heavy reliance on email was leading to slowdowns and errors.

“Most of our job was getting quotes out and processing orders. Yet we would email files out to three different manufacturers and get three different quotes back - and some were incorrect,” says Peggy Harris, president of RedBoard.

The company invested in the development of a customized app to process quotes, but the new system wasn’t fully automated and manufacturing partners outside of the United States couldn’t access it.

Finding the Right Platform

To drive greater efficiency, Harris looked for a technology solution that could streamline its processes and workflows. RedBoard ultimately selected Quick Base and hired VeilSun, Inc., a Quick Base Solution Provider, to build a complete system that would automate and centralize quote and order management between U.S. staff and offshore manufacturers.

- Reduced staff time spent on administrative tasks
- Improved insight into the profitability of jobs
“We looked at the big picture and built a plan from there using our BluePrint process. Within a few weeks they had an entire front-to-back system that is built to scale for the future,” says Rich Crum, Managing Partner, VeilSun, Inc.

Instead of separate systems to manage different workflows, the Quick Base order tracking app traces everything related to customer orders, from initial specifications to quotes from manufacturers and through to delivery of the final order - including shipping costs.

To reduce errors caused by emailing order specifications to factories, RedBoard’s staff enters the specifications into Quick Base, where they can be accessed by manufacturers who then upload their quotes directly into the system. Everything that is needed to quote and manufacture PCBs is centralized within the app, including Gerber files and part numbers.

Customers are kept up to date in real time via order confirmations that are triggered upon order receipt, and automated reports are sent out weekly with order details and status. If errors are seen, corrections are made before production begins. When orders ship from the factory, customer notifications are generated that also alert RedBoard staff to invoice the order.

“There are many different variables in circuit board manufacturing, and if we let even one piece of order information slip, then we’re not going to keep that customer for very long,” says Harris, on the critical importance of accuracy and responsiveness to her business.

Dashboards provide customized data views based on roles, so staff and manufacturers can access the information that they need, while sensitive customer and financial information is protected from unauthorized view.

With the entire order history tracked within Quick Base, reports can be generated to see profit margins calculated by job - and sales personnel can log in to their dashboards to pull reports on their commissions based on sales.
The Benefits of Process Efficiency

Since launching their Quick Base online order tracking app, employees at RedBoard spend less time dealing with errors and delays and more time enjoying process optimization that helped them generate $8 million in sales in 2014 - without having to increase staff.

Email communication that was time-consuming and inefficient has been replaced by Quick Base automation that keeps offshore manufacturers and customers up to date in real time on order details and status.

Bandwidth has been optimized, thanks to the process automation and centralized information access provided by Quick Base that has eliminated much of the manual work that consumed staff time and resources.

Errors in quotes from factories have been reduced now that specifications are centrally shared and easily accessed between U.S. and offshore collaborators.

Less time is spent on administrative tasks because stakeholders can track orders online in less time using fewer resources, and sales personnel can run their own commission reports without having to request the information.

And profitability of jobs that was previously unknown is now clear to see because Quick Base reports give insight into job cost versus revenue received.

“With only four people on staff, we could never have achieved this level of business without Quick Base,” says Harris. “It has become an irreplaceable resource that’s core to our entire business.”
The Partner Perspective
How VeilSun Delivered an End-to-End System in Just a Few Weeks

When RedBoard Circuits approached VeilSun to help build a Quick Base infrastructure, the company wasn’t shy about what it needed.

“They had a vision of what Quick Base could do, and they didn’t want just one bite – they wanted the whole enchilada,” says Rich Crum, Managing Partner, VeilSun, Inc. “They wanted to manage the process from quote to order to design, delivery, and shipping of their boards.”

By taking a methodical approach to planning, including the use of VeilSun’s BluePrint process, VeilSun was able to not only capture all of RedBoard’s requirements, but deliver on a complete system of interconnected parts within just a few weeks.

“We work closely with our clients every step of the way so we make sure the whole journey goes as smoothly as possible, so we looked at their business and workflow needs, and melded that with Quick Base technology.

We were also able to help them rethink some of their non-Quick Base processes, and their willingness to take that leap with our guidance made all the difference,” says Crum.

Ultimately, the bottom line of any small business extends beyond the balance sheet. At RedBoard, VeilSun was able to collaborate with an engaged client and offer benefits beyond just revenues or efficiency gains.

“It hit home that Quick Base not only impacts the bottom line like no other software we have ever known, but it also impacts people. Watching Peggy’s stress level go down – and knowing that she could actually take a vacation for a change – meant as much to us as helping her increase her profit margins,” says Crum.
Quick Base provides a cloud-based platform that empowers problem solvers to quickly turn ideas for better ways to work into apps that make their organizations more efficient. For nearly 20 years, people of all technical backgrounds have been using the Quick Base platform to create solutions that streamline processes, capture real-time data, and improve company operations, all while working in concert with existing IT systems. Based in Cambridge, MA and a former division of Intuit, Quick Base has a 6,000+ customer universe of app-enabled businesses that spans all industries and company sizes, and includes more than half of the Fortune 100.

For more information, please visit: www.QuickBase.com