



BraunAbility and SourceDay

How the automotive mobility leader unified its procurement systems and achieved a **35% increase in on-time delivery (OTD), reduced on-hand inventory by 22%**, and made life easier for buyers and suppliers.

THE CUSTOMER

BraunAbility is the global leader in mobility transportation solutions, changing the lives of people with mobility challenges and those who care for them. Based in Winamac, Indiana, the company was founded by Ralph Braun, who was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy when he was six and unable to walk by the time he was 15. He began building electric scooters out of personal necessity, followed by wheelchair lifts and, eventually, wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Ralph's humble prototype of the first accessible vehicle - a retrofitted mail truck - launched a thriving business that has redefined independence and convenience.

CHAMPION

Ben Hitchens, Associate Director of Procurement and Supply

THE SITUATION

Freedom of mobility is an incredible privilege. Getting into our cars and hitting the road is practically part of the American dream. Bringing that freedom of mobility and automotive independence to people with disabilities is why BraunAbility exists.

Ben Hitchens, the Associate Director of Procurement and Supply at BraunAbility, needed a solution to calm the chaos overtaking the shop floor. His eight-member team managed the sourcing of nearly 15,000 SKUs required to build BraunAbility's industry-leading and life-changing mobility lifts and vans. To ensure the correct parts from suppliers arrived in time for production runs, the buying team ping-ponged between multiple homegrown dashboards, their ERP system, spreadsheets, email, plus notebooks and sticky notes.

It was difficult to work efficiently and with accuracy across so many disconnected systems, even with a strong and seasoned purchasing team. Purchase order (PO) changes – or entire POs in some cases – were missed. As a result, BraunAbility experienced stock outs and production interruptions, and supplier relationships suffered. This was terrible for the business in many ways, most notably by causing overtime on the shop floor and delayed revenue from missed delivery dates. But it wasn't just business that was suffering. The team knew its customers were anxiously awaiting their new vans – and the freedom the vans represented. Understandably, the team took the misses hard. Morale was low and stress was high.

“Before SourceDay, we were talking about a multi-million dollar expansion for warehouse space. Now, we've reduced on-hand inventory by 22% and we're actually looking at no longer storing production components at an offsite warehouse.”

To help keep production lines moving, Ben hired “associate buyers” and paired them with each senior purchaser. While the team initially reported that their workload felt easier to manage, the additional headcount added a layer of communication to the homegrown dashboards and spreadsheets, and ultimately was not a solution for long-term growth. Stock outs and production delays continued. Ben knew the current state wasn't sustainable and needed to find a proven solution.

THE CHANGE

One major focus in the search for a solution was finding a tool that would be widely adopted by buyers and suppliers. Ben wanted to avoid anything that would add to their workload or have a steep learning curve.

There was also a requirement for ease of implementation and rapid time to value. Ben didn't want a solution with a long or tricky implementation cycle and deferred ROI if adoption of the new tool was poor. For BraunAbility suppliers, Ben was looking for a simple, no-cost, and net-zero impact solution. SourceDay was able to meet these requirements and more.

THE RESULTS

BraunAbility achieved a 35% increase in OTD of direct materials after implementation of SourceDay. Both buyers and suppliers quickly adapted to the easy-to-use workflows and saw the benefit of a single source of truth to improve accuracy and efficiency.

With a reduced dependency on safety stock, inventory days on hand (DOH) were reduced by over 20% – even while purchased components grew by 20%. SourceDay allowed BraunAbility to scale without headcount in a way they never thought possible.