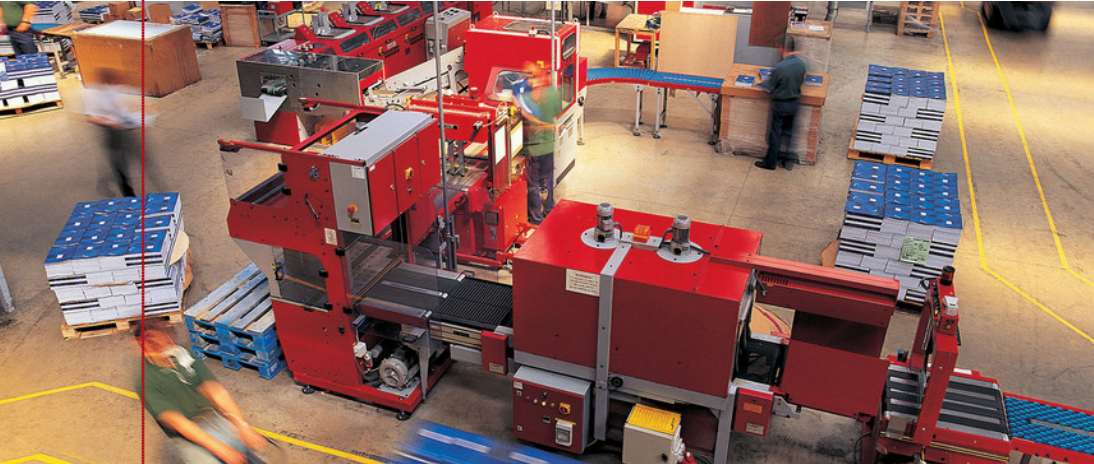


## Ames Tile & Stone Ltd.



### About the company.

Founded by brothers Cyril and David Ames in 1912, Ames Bros. started as a small agency business in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia. The partnership lasted less than two weeks, but the company, which became Ames Tile & Stone Ltd., has lived on, evolving and emerging as a leader in the ceramic tile and stone distribution industry.

Over the years, Ames Tile & Stone has expanded from the small downtown office to western Canadian showroom and warehouse facilities in Burnaby, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. Although the company name and products have changed, the principles of the business have remained the same: commitment to excellence and customer service. At least three generations of the Ames family that have stayed involved in the company continue to uphold these principles. To learn more about Ames Tile, visit [www.amestile.com](http://www.amestile.com).

“ ... Infor ERP A+ is by far the best distribution software, and we’ve made a commitment to stay with it throughout our long-term future. ”

BRUCE NEWTON, IT MANAGER, AMES TILE & STONE

## Setting the strategy.

A common thread in the fabric of the distribution industry is the challenge of maintaining optimum inventory levels. The success of a distribution business relies on managing inventory in a way that keeps costs down. As a wholesale distributor, Ames Tile & Stone is no exception to facing that major challenge. To address it, the company decided to automate and streamline its core business processes.

Ames Tile subsequently purchased and implemented distribution software from a company that Infor™ eventually acquired. Today, the application is called Infor ERP A+, and is designed specifically for wholesale operations.

According to Bruce Newton, IT manager at Ames Tile, the primary issue for Ames Tile lies in inventory and purchasing. He adds, “The overall goal is always to have the right product in the right quantities at the right time, and Infor ERP A+ has supported us extremely well in that respect over the years.”

But to remain competitive for years to come, the company wanted to take a closer, more comprehensive look at its operations and devise a plan to ensure its current technology would continue to help improve efficiency and service to its customers.

## Getting business specific.

When Newton joined Ames Tile about five years after Infor ERP A+ was deployed, one of his first assignments was to evaluate A+ and determine whether it was sufficiently stable, robust, and flexible to carry the company into the future, or whether one of the competitor’s products would better suit it. The assessment considered how the software could help the company meet its overall objectives of not only enhancing customer service levels, but increasing productivity and profitability.

“After the review,” says Newton, “we concluded that Infor ERP A+ is by far the best distribution software, and we’ve made a commitment to stay with it throughout our long-term future.”

## facts at a glance:

> company .....	Ames Tile & Stone Ltd.
> solution .....	Infor ERP
> product .....	A+, Storefront
> industry .....	Distribution
> employees .....	100
> country .....	Canada

## Seeing results.

According to Newton, A+ provides an array of benefits that support the business in various ways. One advantage from an IT perspective is that the software can be implemented directly off the shelf and perform well for the business. He adds, “We’ve been able to use it throughout the years with virtually no modifications, and we upgrade it every one and a half to two years. Each upgrade is extremely fast and easy, preventing any disruptions in our service, and it’s fully supported. A+ has provided excellent value for us just in that respect.”

Over half of Ames Tile’s 100 employees are licensed users of A+, and the application is installed in all four of its branch operations. “In fact, it is the only major software package that we use in the company,” Newton notes. “And all of our employees are extremely happy with its ease of use and stability. We experience no glitches or day-to-day problems with operating the system. The resulting high productivity levels not only help the business, but our employees are happier because of it.”

Ames Tile takes advantage of Infor support services for A+. Newton says, “We’re unique in that we have no programmers to support the software, but we get all the support we need through Infor’s Response Line on a daily basis. Many new features that Infor has added to Response Line in the last few years include making help

## Ames Tile & Stone Ltd.

available for access over the web. It provides us with almost instantaneous support throughout the day and after hours to help us with any issues that occasionally arise.”

One feature of the software that helps Ames Tile with the importing aspect of its business is the international currency function, which allows the company to buy not only in Canadian dollars, but in any country’s currency. Newton explains, “We import much of our tile from around the world, sourcing it from Spain, Italy, India, China, and many other countries, and we need to purchase and pay in different currencies. The international currency module in A+ permits us to develop our contracts in any currency and then converts the currency back into Canadian dollars for consolidation into our financial statements. It’s a real time-saver and avoids errors.”

Since Newton joined Ames Tile, the company has added several new modules that Infor has developed to support the changing business environment and evolving technology needs. The first one that Ames Tile purchased is the data mining functionality, which had a significant impact. Newton declares, “Virtually every department relies on reports generated from that module for day-to-day operation. It adds tremendous value to our company.”

The second additional module that Newton claims had a tremendous effect on Ames Tile is Infor ERP Storefront. Newton says, “It’s enabled us to put a color catalog with all of our products online, allowing our customers to check inventory and place orders 24x7. Infor ERP Storefront has been an extremely helpful, convenient tool for customers, and it’s become a strategic part of our future sales channels.”

In summary, Infor ERP A+ and Infor ERP Storefront have helped Ames Tile in the following ways:

- Provides off-the-shelf, glitch-free functionality with easy, non-disruptive upgrading
- Improves efficiency and accuracy in import contracts via international currency conversion for easy financial consolidation
- Enables every department to use data mining function for more efficient daily operations and reporting
- Offers customers more convenient, 24x7 access to complete online color catalog to order products and check product status

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## Doing business better.

As Ames Tile & Stone expands its use of technology to meet continually changing needs, the next area of concern is radio frequency identification. Says Newton, “We’re always seeking ways to serve new markets and customers, and RFID will help us better understand customer demand, increase inventory visibility, and eliminate manual receiving and shipping. We’re looking at Infor’s supply chain management RFID application to help us improve productivity and profitability, as well as meet the company’s long-term commitment to excellence and customer service.”

## About Infor.

Infor acquires and develops functionally rich software backed by thousands of domain experts and then makes it better through continuous innovation, faster implementation options, global enablement, and flexible buying options. In a few short years, Infor has become one of the largest providers of business software in the world. For additional information, visit [www.infor.com](http://www.infor.com).

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