## Case Study - Friedman Corporation

# Friedman Corporation
enables success of make-to-order manufacturing with Frontier ERP in the Meridian Power Cloud

**Snapshot**

**Industry:** Technology

**Business:** ERP software for manufacturers

**Focus:** Meridian Power Cloud

**Challenges:**

- Win new business by offering flexible cloud deployment options
- Accelerate onboarding for new clients from months to weeks
- Support seasonal workload fluctuations with capacity on demand
- Access world-class expertise for system administration and support

## Overview

Friedman Corporation has been a pioneer of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software for the just-in-time manufacturing sector since the 1980s. Over the following decades, technology has changed, and while many customers still run Friedman's Frontier ERP on their own infrastructure, 75% of its new clients are now looking for a cloud-based solution. Thanks to its close partnership with Meridian IT, Friedman now has the versatile, scalable cloud platform it needs to deliver exactly what clients want.

# Business Challenge

Friedman's core clients are manufacturing companies that build complex, highly configurable products for the construction industry and other sectors. When a contractor orders a set of windows or kitchen and bath cabinetry from one of these companies, they aren't picking from a small range of pre-built SKUs sitting in a warehouse—they're specifying the precise requirements for a custom solution that the manufacturer will build to order.

Managing the supply chain, production, delivery, and accounting of these complex orders is a huge challenge with traditional ERP platforms—but it's exactly where Friedman's Frontier ERP shines. The product configuration management (PCM) engine at the heart of the solution makes it possible to calculate the pricing, generate a bill of materials, schedule the production, and estimate the delivery date for the customer in real time.

**"Speed really matters,"** explains Craig Skonieczny, Friedman's President. **"We have one client that doesn't sell through a traditional dealer network—they have contractors driving up to their building and asking for quotes directly. So, there's no curtain to hide behind—if the system is slow or unreliable, it has a direct impact on their sales and their customer relationships.**

**"That's why we've always built our software on the powerful, scalable, and reliable IBM i platform. It's also why we've built a long-term partnership with Meridian IT—because they have the expertise to help our clients get the best out of the IBM hardware."**

The combination of powerful PCM software and fast, reliable systems gives Friedman a clear competitive advantage. To take its business to the next level, Friedman wanted to free clients from the burden of system administration and infrastructure management by offering Frontier as a fully managed, cloud-based service.

# Solution

Friedman and Meridian IT worked closely to design the cloud version of Frontier and bring it to market. The Meridian Power Cloud—one of the largest IBM Power-based cloud infrastructures in the world—proved to be an ideal platform for the new service.

> **"Meridian IT is one of the few companies that can provide the full breadth and depth of IBM i expertise, which gives our clients the confidence that their systems are in safe hands."**
>
> Craig Skonieczny, President
> Friedman Corporation

**"It's not just about the infrastructure,"** says Craig Skonieczny. **"The Meridian IT team has been providing managed services for IBM i for many years, so they really know how to manage these systems at scale. Most companies that use IBM i might have one or two people who know how to keep the system running—but it's extremely costly to find experts that can make an impact on the  IBM i performance, security, and data protection. Meridian IT is one of the few companies that can provide the full breadth and depth of IBM i expertise, which gives our clients the confidence that their systems are in safe hands."**

Teaming up with Meridian IT also empowers the Friedman team to focus on what they do best—developing and enhancing Frontier ERP to meet the ever-evolving needs of make-to-order manufacturing clients.

**"It's a funny story,"** recalls Craig Skonieczny. **"In the early 2000s, when one of our clients first asked if we could provide a cloud version of Frontier, we decided to buy an IBM Power server and host it ourselves. It turned out to be so much harder than we thought! All the system administration work was a huge burden and a distraction for our team.**

**"So, we know from personal experience that it's better to outsource all the intricacies of infrastructure management to the experts at Meridian IT. And that's why we now recommend all our new clients take the cloud option, instead of putting themselves through the pain and expense of purchasing, installing, configuring, managing, and replacing servers themselves."**

# Customer Benefits

Today, when Friedman's clients choose to run Frontier in the cloud, they gain a number of key advantages.

First, they avoid the need to invest significant capital in new hardware, and they don't need to wait for servers to be delivered and installed. As a result, Friedman can get them up and running on Frontier in weeks, not months.

Second, Meridian IT's IBM i expertise and experience running Frontier for multiple clients means that they can accurately benchmark the amount of processor, memory, and storage resources that a new Friedman client will need—ensuring a right-sized environment that is optimally tuned for performance and availability.

Third, Meridian IT's cloud architecture enables seamless scalability, so the Frontier application can access additional resources on demand as user numbers and data volumes increase.

The cloud platform also makes it easy to support fluctuations in demand by scaling up or down as needed—ensuring cost-efficiency for manufacturers whose businesses experience seasonal peaks and valleys.

**"If your business is manufacturing windows, you're probably not going to get as many orders in January as you are in July, especially in states that have very cold winters,"** explains Craig Skonieczny. **"The ability to flex system capacity to fit your demand can really help to optimize costs."**

Finally, by freeing manufacturers' IT teams from routine system administration, security management, data protection, maintenance, and upgrade work, the decision to run Frontier in the cloud can contribute to direct operational cost savings.

**"You probably need at least one full-time employee to manage an IBM i server on-premises and finding good people with the right skills can be expensive,"** concludes Craig Skonieczny. **"It's easier and more cost-effective to let Meridian IT take care of the hardware, so you can focus on getting the most out of Frontier's industry-leading functionality."**

## Meridian IT

**For 40+ years, Meridian IT has been helping medium and enterprise businesses solve their complex technical IT problems. Through a unique strategic perspective, deep expertise, and a personalized proactive approach, Meridian IT is the top IT solutions provider in the industry.**

Offering best-in-class cloud, hybrid, and on-premises data storage solutions, backup and recovery solutions, security solutions, hyperconverged infrastructure, contact center solutions, flexible pricing models and award-winning managed services, Meridian IT works with each client to create a customized plan to help solve their IT obstacles.

Meridian IT is part of Meridian Group International. Meridian Group International is a privately held organization headquartered in Deerfield, IL. Operating since 1979, Meridian Group International is a leading IT service provider and equipment leasing and finance company across 4 continents.

## meridian IT

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