

From Wooden Spoons to Industry Leadership: How INNERGY Helped Dovetail Scale to \$30M+

Executive Summary

Isaac Alexander started woodworking at age five, selling handmade spoons at farmers' markets by eleven. Today, he leads Dovetail, a \$30+ million millwork company with 140 employees that's become one of the most innovative players in the industry. This case study explores how INNERGY's software platform and educational community have supported Dovetail's remarkable growth from \$8 million to over \$30 million in annual revenue, while helping Isaac evolve as a leader and build a culture of continuous improvement.

Background: The Entrepreneurial Journey

Growing up on a farm in Texas, Isaac Alexander learned the value of craftsmanship and direct-to-consumer sales early. By age fourteen, he was earning over \$600 per Saturday selling wooden spoons at farmers' markets. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to get his products into Whole Foods stores across Texas in his early twenties. After opening his own millwork shop at age twenty, Isaac began taking on commercial projects, starting with Chuy's restaurants and eventually expanding to bars on Austin's 6th Street.

A pivotal moment came in 2014, at age 27, when Isaac realized his business couldn't scale if everything depended on him. "If it was forever about me, and people wanted to just talk to Isaac, I would never be able to scale it," he recalls. Despite tight finances, he invested \$16,000 in professional branding and marketing—a decision that helped propel the company from \$100,000 to \$300,000 in annual revenue the following year.

The Challenge: Managing Rapid Growth

By 2018, Dovetail had grown to approximately 50 employees, but Isaac faced significant operational challenges:

- Inefficient estimating processes using basic screen takeoff tools
- No parametric data to understand material requirements
- Limited visibility into capacity and bottlenecks
- No standardized way to measure or improve efficiency
- Difficulty scaling operations while maintaining quality

Perhaps most notably, Isaac had never visited another millwork facility. "I'd never been in a commercial millwork shop before," he admits. "I'd never been in someone else's shop. I didn't know what they looked like."

The Solution: Software Plus Community

Isaac's introduction to INNERGY came at an AWI Spring Leadership Conference in 2018, where he heard INNERGY CEO, Marc Sanderson, speak about software, capacity, and bottlenecks. While initially sceptical about cloud-based software, Isaac agreed to tour Marc's millwork company, Wilkie Sanderson. The visit proved transformative, showing him both the potential of modern millwork operations and the power of learning from industry peers.

He decided to implement INNERGY for two primary reasons:

1. The estimating platform offered immediate efficiency gains
2. The community aspect provided access to peer learning and best practices

"If I get nothing else out of it other than just the takeoff, it's faster than what I have right now, and it's worth it," Isaac recalls of his initial decision. **"And then I saw the value in the community and understanding that having people you could learn from and not live in a vacuum because the competitors don't talk to each other was actually really valuable to me."**

Key Results

Since partnering with INNERGY, Dovetail has achieved:

- Significant growth, increasing annual revenue from \$8 million to \$30+ million
- 30-50% faster estimating processes
- Doubled engineering capacity through workflow optimization
- Reduction in work order processing time from 15 days to 5 days
- Implementation of data-driven capacity planning and bottleneck management
- Development of sophisticated multi-year forecasting capabilities

Beyond Software: The Power of Community and Continuous Learning

While the software provides crucial operational capabilities, Isaac emphasizes that INNERGY's greatest value lies in its educational community. Through facility tours, executive forums, and peer relationships, Dovetail has gained insights that have transformed their operations.

For example, a visit to Mission Bell Manufacturing in California led Dovetail to:

- Discover and implement a more efficient finish line solution
- Reduce work order sizes to improve flow
- Establish ongoing knowledge-sharing relationships with industry leaders

Isaac describes the power of these learning opportunities: **"Every time I've ever gone to something INNERGY related... you're focused for just a moment on some information, you're like, 'oh my god.'" He recently attended an executive forum thinking, "I know I'm not going to get a ton out of this, but there's going to be one or two nuggets that stick in my brain and change."** He came back and implemented multiple improvements to Dovetail's operations.

Cultural Transformation

Working with INNERGY has helped Isaac build a culture of continuous improvement at Dovetail. **"We have a culture of constant change," he explains. "It's constantly changing. We're constantly trying to improve things and that's just the way it is if you want to work here."**

This culture manifests in creative approaches to performance improvement. Recently, Isaac's GM made a \$1,000 bet with two machine operators that they couldn't achieve 60% efficiency within three weeks. The GM told the operators, "I'm betting on you. If I lose, I'm paying Isaac a thousand dollars of my money. If I win, I'm giving you 500 each." Within days, efficiency jumped to over 60%.

Looking to the Future

Isaac sees technology adoption as crucial for survival in the millwork industry. **"If you don't embrace a software that is literally being run by millwork people and set up for your**

success... you're gonna get left behind," he warns, noting a recent case where a well-known competitor went out of business after failing to modernize.

Today, with robots running in his shop and continuous process improvements driven by data, Isaac remains focused on pushing innovation while maintaining strong local market share. Rather than expanding to multiple locations like private equity-backed competitors, he's choosing his current market—a strategy inspired by successful Texas businesses like H-E-B.

Key Lessons Learned

1. Software implementation requires continuous reinforcement: Even with good tools, people need regular reminders and hands-on practice to fully utilize capabilities.
2. Community accelerates learning: Access to peer insights and best practices can help avoid costly mistakes and identify improvement opportunities.
3. Leadership engagement matters: Sometimes executives need to dive deep into operational details to drive meaningful change.
4. Culture enables scale: Building a culture of continuous improvement helps attract and retain high-performing talent.
5. Focus beats expansion: Maximizing efficiency and market share in one location often yields better results than rapid geographic expansion.

Conclusion

Dovetail's journey with INNERGY demonstrates how the right combination of software tools and community-driven education can support dramatic business growth. By embracing both technological innovation and continuous learning, Dovetail has built a culture that attracts top talent and drives ongoing improvement. As the millwork industry continues to evolve, Dovetail's story offers valuable lessons for other companies seeking to modernize their operations while maintaining craftsmanship and quality.