



Case Study:
Corporate
Direct Tax

Tax & Accounting

Guardian Industries Improves Fixed Assets Management



Guardian Industries, headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, employs over 21,000 people in 21 countries on five continents. The name Guardian is renowned throughout the world as a manufacturer and distributor of quality glass, automotive and building products.

Kathy Castillo, U.S. Tax Director at Guardian, had this to say about upgrading their fixed assets management software.



Kathy Castillo
U.S. Tax Director
Guardian Industries
Auburn Hills, Michigan

Impetus for Change

We began searching for improved fixed assets management solutions when it became clear that our legacy installation was unable to fully support our diverse user base and meet a variety of increasing needs. The system had been in place for years and the vendor no longer supported or updated the software. We also sought to improve reporting by enabling users to create their own reports, rather than rely upon report generation from a central person in our corporate offices. While routine reports were always available on schedule, answers to special queries might take a very long time. People needed more timely information.

Arriving at a Solution

Our selection process began by contacting a variety of vendors to determine product capabilities. One of the distinguishing factors was the number of books, or separate methods of computing depreciation, that we need in our environment. Every vendor can handle the very basics, but we need extra books to automate computations for California depreciation methods, foreign subsidiary earnings and profits computations, and so forth.

We narrowed it down to three applications that we could use and received product demonstrations. User interface was critical in our evaluation, since we have a diverse population of part-time users. Therefore, ease-of-use on an infrequent basis was a high consideration. Two experienced tax professionals conducted demo reviews, and when we got down to a narrow choice, we included some users in the evaluation process.

“We approached the project thinking as accountants and Wolters Kluwer helped us think about how the issues affect the software ... The implementation process was so well designed and planned by the on-site team.”

– Kathy Castillo,
U.S. Tax Director,
Guardian Industries

The project selection was held among a few individuals, but the project implementation required the support of our internal IS team for database management and network security access, etc. Our internal IS team also helped write the routines for generating monthly feeder files of journal entries to the general ledger software. We use a unique general ledger system, so this level of customization was necessary.

Our selection criteria included:

- Mathematical accuracy, especially with negative cost assets.
- Ease of user interface, especially addition of an asset.
- Ability to designate our desired tax and accounting methods/lives from a common code.
- Ease of printing, calculating and exporting data at each individual user’s level.
- Ability to handle our large number of entities, calculation books and assets.

We selected CCH® Fixed Assets Manager largely because of its user-friendly interface, combined with the basic technical criteria that we established. In contrast to other systems, this system is extremely easy for new users to get acclimated to for day-to-day usage. This was a valuable feature for us.

The implementation process was so well designed and planned, that we completed our conversion within the planned timeline. There were so many fine details that we wanted to capture from the old system and bring to the new system, we couldn’t have handled the transition alone.

The Solution at Work

We now have more robust information in the hands of users. Our plant users print any report they want, whenever they need it. Plant accountants can now answer questions like “What is the value of the equipment we ought last year?” with a dozen keystrokes. Headquarters accountants also can quickly query across all plants. For instance, insurance specialists may ask about the cost of all automobiles owned by the company and get real-time answers.

Plant accountants can scan cost centers at a glance. Errors pop out and can be corrected immediately. This constant fine-tuning has improved timeliness and accuracy in a way that was not possible before.

Transfers are almost completely automatic. The transferring plant initiates the transaction and CCH Fixed Assets Manager creates an up-to-date asset for the destination plant. The destination plant edits cost center information, cost/state location and the work is done. These transactions were formerly manual data entry processes coordinated by telephone calls between plants.

Our asset information handling continues to evolve as our people find new and improved ways to access and use it. We approached the project thinking as accountants and Wolters Kluwer helped us think about how the issues affect the use of the software.

About Guardian Industries

Headquarters: Auburn Hills, Michigan

Locations: Over 20 countries

Industry: Manufacturing – glass, automotive and building supplies

Products: World leaders in float and fabricated glass, external vehicle systems, and commercial and residential building products

Website: www.guardian.com

Number of Employees: 21,000

Number of U.S. Tax Departments: 20

Number of Entities: 85+ U.S. and 75+ Foreign

Challenge

- Implement a fixed assets management solution across 58 sites and train over 100 employees in a short timeframe
- Convert 24,000+ assets in six books of data

Solution

- CCH Fixed Assets Manager
- Data conversion & implementation
- Training (on-site and remote)
- Superior client support

Why CCH Fixed Assets Manager

- Ability to handle large number of entities, calculation books and assets
- Well-designed user interface
- Flexible and experienced team dedicated to exceeding expectations

Results

- Right information, right now in the hands of better informed users
- On-time implementation

Contact information:

Wolters Kluwer
2700 Lake Cook Road
Riverwoods, IL 60015
United States
800-739-9998

Please visit [TaxNA.WoltersKluwer.com/Corporations](https://www.taxna.wolterskluwer.com/corporations)
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