



K8 Manufacturing helps to fuel success

Based in Gloucestershire, Fluid Transfer International is a market leader in the design, development and manufacture of aviation and naval refuelling equipment – a major supplier to the Ministry of Defence and UK airports.



Results

- Complete process control for parts, assemblies and kits
- Job bar-coding saves time
- Accurate contract reviews
- Dashboards aid decision making
- Monthly accounts produced fast
- Quick quotations boosts service
- Configurator tool saves time
- Fully-managed quality issues
- Stage payments = better cash flow

Exporting around 75% of its production, the company is a preferred partner to major oil companies, into-plane operators and defence organisations worldwide.

The extensive FTi product range includes bulk refuellers, diesel and electric dispensers, refuelling carts, marine, portable and static refuelling systems and pump sets. The company also manufactures components for resale and provides equipment repair, maintenance and refurbishment services. Around 2,000 units of FTi equipment are currently in service in more than 70 countries. The company fulfils around 1,500 customer orders annually.

Lean principles

Implementing K8 Manufacturing in 2001—the system provides the company with complete process control from sales order through to delivery. Richard Iles-Caine, Finance Director said, “We aim to use just-in-time principles to keep inventory investment to a minimum but at the same time any delays in production can have huge implications. A refuelling truck, one of our core products, typically comprises more than 1,000 items, but only 50 or so cost more than £100. Because every order is bespoke to customer requirements, we work K8 Manufacturing hard to support the whole cycle from quotation to completion.”

The company also has to manage relatively long lead times and with vehicle chassis taking up to nine weeks to arrive from the manufacturer, a large order can take several months to deliver. “We support a combination of new and existing customers, some of whom have programmed replacement or refurbishment cycles. We also have the capability to respond quickly – a significant export order for a customer in Indonesia being delivered in just 10 weeks.”

Meeting customer needs

With such a mix of customer demands, the management team make very effective use of K8 Manufacturing and use its workflow tools to manage situations as they arise. Manufacturing around 50 vehicle refuellers annually, as well as our other products, we appreciate the system’s versatility in being able to handle all types of purchased parts, assemblies and kits. With each order based on standard labour times and material costs, we use the system for contract reviews to compare actual data and then make any necessary changes for future orders.”



// The system's Configurator tool has speeded up processes.

Highlights

- The system helps to keep inventory investment to a minimum
- Immediate savings in back office processes
- Visibility on who is carrying out which process on any given job at any time

Quality control

Given the nature of the product, quality control, for example is a particularly important area for FTi. All customer and factory-originating issues are recorded in the system's call logging module for reporting and analysis. "Although we carry out full testing before shipment, most of the issues we experience arise from an in-service breakdown. Invariably there are parts to be recovered and returned to the supplier, often under warranty."

Moving the system forward

FTi take a very pro-active approach to using systems to help move the business forward and has successively added to the system's functionality and capabilities as new releases have been made available. "The introduction of Barcode scanning, which replaced the previous manual timesheet recording, resulted in immediate savings in back office processes. We now know who is carrying out which process on any given job at any time. If any issues are arising we can respond immediately."

Managing such a specialist business with long lead times can easily present cash flow problems. FTi now make use of the system's staged payment functionality which allows for interim invoicing and the correct accounting to take place.

"With some customers making their first approach for price guide information – perhaps prior to a formal tender approach, we have also introduced the system's Quick quote function which enables us to provide a response in 30 minutes or less. We have also implemented the system's Configurator tool which has speeded up our bill of materials processes. By being able to select from parts and component options, our design team can focus more on their specialist tasks."

Business performance essentials

FTi are enthusiastic users of the Management Dashboards which provide real-time information on a self-service basis, and avoid the time-consuming work of fulfilling requests for reports. "In the final analysis, keeping our finger on the pulse of company performance is key. It's a real plus that the system enables us to publish the management accounts just three days after month end," said Richard.

About Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS)

KCS provides advanced, fully integrated business systems, installation and support services for the manufacturing and field service markets, the company has over 40 years of extensive knowledge and experience of working with manufacturers, field service engineers and distributors across many sectors. Our class leading solutions are functionally rich and highly flexible.

Our solutions have a track record of delivering wide ranging benefits including greater operational efficiency and cost savings, resource and asset utilisation, together with real-time information for management decision making.

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