Kerridge
Commercial Systems

K8 MFS software is the perfect fit for Gresham Power Electronics

For more than 50 years, Salisbury based Gresham Power Electronics Ltd has specialised in designing and manufacturing bespoke naval power conversion and distribution equipment for the marine defence industry – in the UK and worldwide.

gresham
power electronics

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> Karen Jay,
> Director of Operations &
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>
> Gresham Power Electronics

"Our equipment is deployed by the Royal Navy as well as many foreign navies," explained Director of Operations & Defence Business, Karen Jay. "Everything we build is usually bespoke to an individual class ship. All our equipment is hand built and we have no automated processes at all. Following customer approval of our designs, we then manufacture prototypes and deliverables. Some products take several months to build and test, and the equipment may go through shock, vibration and EMC testing. It's therefore critical for us to understand what our project costs are from start to finish. And, because we must support our products for 25 years, it's crucial we have traceability of every component used for when the equipment comes back to us for servicing and cleaning, as well as for tight engineering control."

Gresham Power chose K8 MFS v14 software to manage their business processes after their incumbent supplier was no longer able to provide support to their 20-year-old system. "The old DOS based system had been updated with a Windows interface which looked quite user friendly but was anything but," remembered Karen. "It was such a struggle to get to the information we needed quickly and impossible to extract data for reporting. It was also impossible to delete obsolete parts and the system was getting really clogged up as data cleansing was far too time consuming. We did however have plenty of warning that we would need to upgrade so we had time to look at a number of systems."

Karen said that the ability of a system to calculate 'actual' costs was a key requirement as they seldom made the same piece of equipment twice. "Calculations based on standard or average costs just don't work for us. We also needed to be able to export all of our existing data to any new system because of the very long-term support we provide. We eventually chose K8 MFS v14 because it provided the costing model we needed, and the team reassured us they could successfully extract all our data. The team from Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS) were also able to train us using our own data. This made it far easier to check the data fields imported were correct, as our users were working with familiar data. Virtually every other provider we looked at only offered on-line training with documentation that didn't match what you could see on their videos - with dummy data that bore no relevance to our business."

"The software is also very intuitive to use, and the Financial Controller and I decided it was just what we needed. As a small company it was a big undertaking to implement a new system and we don't have the luxury of an IT department helping us out. It's now used in every part of our business – for material control, purchasing, sales, engineering and finance. The integrated accounting is also a big bonus."

Karen said that another significant benefit was how the KCS team could easily extract all their data at the beginning of the project, well before implementation. This enabled her engineers to do a rapid audit of the 28,000 parts listed, remove those that were obsolete and implement the system with cleansed data.

The Gresham team also appreciated the flexibility of K8 MFS v14. Karen explained, "Some of our customers ask us for a part they only know by its 'NATO number'. So, we've set up the system to allow us to add a NATO number to every part and this allows us to cross-reference with our own part numbers. Things like that really make our life easier. It means we have better quality control too as the more information we can enter about manufacturers or batches gives us more control over our purchasing, and we're less likely to be supplied with counter-feit components. The system provides us with 100% traceability and shows us when each part arrived, from which manufacturer and from which batch etc. We can also identify if each part is REACH and/or RoSH compliant, which is now a standard industry requirement."

As supplier invoices, labour and external testing costs are entered on the system, the Gresham team can check what the actual costs are at any stage of a project. Once a product is complete it's released to the sales team who look after invoicing and despatch. "We can track the whole project in the system," said Karen, "And, as all financial accounting is integrated too, the whole process is under one umbrella." According to Karen, reporting in K8 MFS v14 is 'phenomenal'! "We can export anything into Excel. I pull various financial reports each week and I can also analyse things like supplier shortages, on time delivery and cost control. Our engineers might want to see how many bills of materials they have in draft. In fact, I can't think of anything you CAN'T report on!"

Karen said she's not heard any negative comments about the system from anyone working at Gresham. "Everyone feels comfortable using it and the few minor snags we had when we first went live were dealt with quickly by the KCS support team. Whenever we contact anyone at KCS they're always accessible and come back to us extremely quickly. The people who trained us knew the system well and there was nothing we couldn't throw at them. Most importantly the KCS implementation team were very focused on giving us exactly what we wanted in the way the system was configured. Their ongoing support throughout the project gave us confidence we would get a system that was right for us."

The small team of 14 at Gresham Power also operate a distribution business for the supply of commercial power blocks. "The beauty of the KCS system is that you can operate several diverse businesses on it," said Karen. "If we were to go down the acquisition route there's no reason why we couldn't set up a new company on it and our financials would all be there already. It really gives you the opportunity to expand your business in many ways."

Gresham uses an on-premise server because of the sensitive nature of the business. The old system had to run off a hard cable network but now they use a wireless connection and there are none of the speed issues that the company experienced when evaluating other systems. Part look-up takes just a split second and data entry and processing is quick and efficient.

Karen said, "Once we made our decision to go with K8 MFS v14 it was a huge relief. We have a system we're all happy with and it's been a really good outcome for us."

About Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS)
KCS provides advanced, fully integrated business systems, installation and support services for the manufacturing, wholesale and distributive markets. The company has over 40 years of extensive knowledge and experience of working with wholesalers, distributors and manufacturers across many sectors. The company's class leading solutions are functionally rich and highly flexible.

The KCS product solution set has a track record of delivering wide-ranging benefits including greater operational efficiency, cost savings and resource and asset utilisation, together with real-time information for management decision making.

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