The Kerridge CS (KCS) solution portfolio continues to grow

Over 150 KCS customers travelled an estimated 60,000 miles between them to attend the KCS customer conference. A statistic, according to UK and Ireland Managing Director, James Mitchell, that demonstrated the enthusiasm K8 users have for learning and updating themselves on current versions and options in the KCS software portfolio.

Conference delegates included companies that were new to the software as well as those who have been using it for 30 years plus. And, among the delegate companies involved in the distribution of timber and other building materials were those who worked in the more niche industries of fish radar systems and ginger biscuits!

KCS Group CEO, Ian Bendelow, explained that the rapid growth in the group's turnover, from £57M to £82M in the last few years, was due to the users' insatiable appetite for more KCS solutions, as well as a strategic acquisition programme that was enabling the integration of new technology into the core K8 ERP system. He also told delegates that the KCS group now employs 900 people in 18 sites across the globe and that over 27% of them are involved in R & D.

The focus of much of KCS's R & D is on the development of mobile apps and Head of Product Marketing, Tony Pey, explained how the use of business apps was 'enabling companies to take technology to their jobs – rather than taking a job to technology'. "Imagine being able to build an order on an iPad while walking around the yard or showroom with a customer, instead of having to go back to key it in behind the counter," he said. The mobile apps already available to K8 users include ePOD, which now manages over 12,000 deliveries each day. Others in the pipeline include eBranchOrder, an app for placing orders around the branch, which also includes functionality for timber companies working with tally quantities; eStocktake which also manages PI; and eWarehouse which is a comprehensive solution for managing all warehouse activity.

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- Ian Bendelow, Group CEO, Kerridge Commercial Systems

Konnect Conference 2019

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- Jayne Hill, Product Manager, Vecta

Tony also told delegates about the forthcoming Configurator module, which is an innovative solution for building complex configurations, designed for use by manufacturers of doors etc, and which will include customers' specific pricing.

Chief Support Officer, Chris Owen, updated delegates on the changes he was making to transform support services through investment in a new support services team; enhanced knowledge base and self-service options; individual scorecards if required; and a defensive programming initiative which was preventing common user mistakes.

The company's acquisition of EDP has brought the Vecta solution for CRM and sales analytics into the KCS portfolio. Jayne Hill, Vecta Product Manager, said that currently more data is created every two days than ever existed before 2003! Therefore data availability and ways of accessing it are key challenges for sales and management teams. She said that K8 users who have already implemented Vecta are finding that the data sales staff could previously only find by asking someone to run a report, was now being delivered directly to the dashboards of the individuals who need it. She said one customer had found that by using Vecta their sales team had 20% more time to spend in front of customers.

Day two of the conference gave KCS customers the chance to focus on specific aspects of the software through breakout sessions on new mobile apps, effective procurement, rebates and price support, smart dashboards, rental business management, manufacturing solutions and more.

Lighter conference content was provided by neuroscientist Dr Jack Lewis who gave delegates tips on how to make their brains work smarter and comedienne Jo Caulfield provided an excellent and entertaining close to the day.

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