



K8 chosen to standardise IT within Primaflow F & P

The UK's largest plumbing and heating wholesaler, Primaflow F & P, has implemented K8 ERP software across its three regional distribution centres, five regional sales offices and extended trans-shipment network, from which goods are delivered directly to independent merchant customers using the company's own fleet of vehicles.



Results

- K8 provides an 'open' ERP backbone linkable to third party applications
- Web orders transact successfully through the system
- Everything on day one picked and delivered successfully
- Clear stock visibility helps warehouse team maximise customer service
- K-Cloud deployment means more flexibility around disaster recovery

K8, provided by Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS), powers the sales transactions, stock allocation, warehouse picking and route planning and delivery completion. Invoicing and credit control are also managed in K8 through the integrated general ledger.

Following an acquisition four years ago, Primaflow and F & P merged to complement the shared customer base with a broader range of products. Primaflow was already using K8 software and a decision was taken to extend it across the new entity. Three months before go-live, Primaflow's version of K8 was upgraded to match the latest version being installed at F & P. David Dunbavand, Programme Director at Primaflow F & P explained, "Our key requirement was to standardise the platform within Primaflow and F & P and we had a number of options. It was a relatively easy decision to standardise the group by building on the K8 system already in use at Primaflow. We could see K8 was a modern, flexible and robust system that could cope with the demands of our industry, but it was also important for us to have an ERP backbone that was 'open' and that could be linked to third party applications such as eCommerce websites and ePOD. The Primaflow website was already integrated with their K8 software, with web orders transacting successfully through to the system, and all of these factors were key in our decision to implement K8 across the group."

Once the decision was made the Primaflow F & P team chose to deploy their K8 software on the K-Cloud. This meant that KCS would take on the responsibility of maintaining the system and there would be more flexibility around disaster recovery and the ability to grow and scale the system as required.

Mr Dunbavand and his team had agreed to 'go-live as quickly as we can do it well'. He said, "We spent a lot of time in the preparation stages and actually delayed go-live a couple of times to ensure all lights were green. We're particularly proud of being able to offer a 5pm cut off for next day delivery but, as you can imagine, this put huge pressure on an ERP system, and on us as a team, as we led up to switching over from one system to another."

Even though part of the group was already familiar with K8, the project team organised in-depth training delivered by internal specialists, with plenty of exercises and testing, so they could monitor progress and ensure everyone would be confident with the system from day one.

"At go-live we finished putting orders on the old system at 5pm on Friday. Staff came in to work at 8am on Monday – our busiest day – and switched on K8. Reassuringly orders flowed through seamlessly to the warehouse management system for picking! There were a few minor stresses for the IT team to react to, none of which had a significant customer impact but, it's been recognised by the whole business as a very successful go-live – just prior to peak season when we needed it to be stable and reliable."

Case Study

Primaflow F&P



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- David Dunbavand, Programme Director, [Primaflow F&P](#)

There are approximately 50 sales office colleagues working across the group who each take up to 100 calls every day. This equates to around 20,000 sales transactions each week, which are put on the system for overnight picking according to the delivery route automatically scheduled within K8. On receipt of the order, K8 reserves the stock and generates a pick list, delivery note and an invoice.

“Our sales office and project team deserve great credit for making everything work so smoothly at go-live”, said Mr Dunbavand, “as do the picking and operations teams who, at 5pm on the Monday, started to use bar code readers to find and pick stock. This was challenging due to the size of the change and the product range involved but everything on day one was picked and delivered successfully.”

Members of the F & P sales office team said that K8 is ‘cleaner’, quicker and easier to use than their previous system. It’s more intuitive and, through new functionality such as pop ups that remind them of account details, they can also see the potential for it to make their job easier.

Mr Dunbavand said the warehouse management team also quickly became familiar with K8 and were able to trust the system and maximise customer service through its clear stock visibility. He added, “Our warehouse team would often find it difficult to manage stock counts linked to sales, credits and returns of goods. They can now solve queries more easily because of the drill down transactional data tied in with the warehouse management part of the system.”

Up until 5pm each day, orders taken from the regional sales offices are allocated to the regional distribution centres based on their geographical split. They are batch picked, wrapped, labelled and marshalled into temporary holding areas ready to be delivered by trunker to the trans-shipment points. Labels for products and pallets are generated within K8 ready to be cross-docked on to the vans at the trans-shipment points that will take them on to the customers. All paperwork that supports the delivery such as manifests and PoDs are all generated automatically in K8 and the system’s delivery management module. A pilot scheme is being prepared to implement K8’s ePoD app with a view to extending the digital reach of the system and allowing customers to sign for goods on screen and then receive electronic proofs of delivery.

Other plans for K8 at the Primaflow and F & P sites include adding the ‘linking products’ functionality to help online customers understand which products go with what, and ‘kit sets’ which will simplify the picking of products with multiple boxes which can easily be mis-picked. The business is also working with KCS to develop some bespoke workplaces (dashboards) that will help users manage their daily workflow. This should better collate information and provide alerts for tasks that need intervention. There is also more development planned around purchasing and dynamic scheduling.

“I’m already thinking KCS will need a bigger team of consultants just to support us,” said Mr Dunbavand! “I have no regrets about choosing K8 as we are confident it’s the flexible system platform we need for the future. After all we are only trying to do a simple job well – take orders, pick, deliver and get paid for them – and K8 gives us the ability to do that.”

About Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS)

We provide specialist software, services and support to deliver fully integrated trading and business management solutions to distributive trades customers, large and small – wherever they are in the world. Immersed in the distributive trades for over 40 years, our technical experts are thought leaders in trading and management technology, and our innovative and flexible approach ensures our customers partner with us for the long-term.

Our mission is simple: to design and deliver high performance, integrated ERP solutions that enable our distributive trade customers to source effectively, stock efficiently, sell profitably and service competitively.

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