



## K8 Manufacturing is vital for Variable Message Signs

Variable Message Signs (VMS) is the UK market leader for transport signage systems. Serving road, rail, airports and seaport sectors, the Hill & Smith-owned company has considerable technical capabilities as an innovator and developer. K8 Manufacturing is an integral part of the business; processing transactions, controlling costs and managing profitability.



### Results

- Integrated solution
- Comprehensive functionality
- Job Ledger – a vital tool
- Flexible process disciplines
- Effective business control
- Real-time information
- Platform for future development

### Setting the scene

In 2014, Hill & Smith acquired Variable Message Signs. A strategic move that, combined with its Techspan Systems operation, formed a world-class provider, with an extensive, multi-sector product range. VMS and Techspan Systems now operate together as VMS and have one of the UK's largest installed bases of programmable sign systems. Customers comprise Highways England and Transport Scotland, joint venture organisations and large corporates including Balfour Beatty and Carillion. The merged company processes around 500 to 1,000 orders annually; with a lead time of up to three months. The pipeline is typically 80-200 orders at any one time, which can comprise up to 2,000 signs and equipment provision.

### K8 Manufacturing

Variable Message Signs Ltd were already using K8 Manufacturing and in 2015, the Techspan Systems operation transferred across to K8 Manufacturing, forming part of the project to integrate the two companies. The stock control, purchasing, sales order and job ledger applications are central to managing the business on a day-to-day basis. Louise Martin, Finance Director, said: "With its extensive flexibility, the system allows us to operate the business our way and not according to fixed processes and disciplines. We are in the driving seat with K8 Manufacturing and can easily amend production schedules and customer requirements as necessary."

### Working with Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS)

More than just a software developer, KCS is fully committed to its partnership role, working closely with customers as needs change and evolve. Referring to the Techspan- VMS integration, Louise referred to a demanding schedule. "Even though we set a tight timetable for the work, we had the benefit of combining two similar trading companies. Full support from KCS's knowledgeable training team, with their excellent understanding of our business, contributed to the project's success."



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### Highlights

- Close working relationship
- Strong business appreciation
- Knowledgeable consultants
- Excellent training provision
- Professional help-desk

### Job Ledger is key

For VMS, the K8 Manufacturing Job Ledger module is key to managing orders and maintaining accurate records. "The Job Ledger is the system hub and used very effectively across the business. Collating order detail; from sales order input, through purchase orders, weekly time sheet records and parts issued, we have an accurate picture of what's going on. Work-in-progress adjustments are easily managed, the invoice position is straightforward to determine and hence the values that can be released into the P&L." said Louise.

### Flexibility

Although systems are critical to business operations, VMS continues to rely on its experienced and long serving staff to accommodate customer requirements. Projects to install sign systems are often complex and invariably part of major, long term engineering work. Delivery dates can be brought forward or slipped back and signs destined for one order may have to be re-assigned. "Our task is to meet all customer expectations and having a system that enables us to do that quickly and efficiently gives us a competitive edge."

### Moving forward

Louise said that KCS and VMS work well together; for a business that continues to develop that gives VMS both confidence and security in moving forward with their systems. The recent acquisition of Tegrel - a manufacturer and long-time supplier, heralds another integration project and will extend the use of the K8 Manufacturing Works Orders application in particular. "We are supported by a professional and knowledgeable IT partner, with a 'can do' attitude - an excellent position for our future," said Louise.

### 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.

### Contact KCS

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