



Making the transition from an in-house bespoke system

WhitChem is a successful, specialist distributor of chemicals, mineral and polymers representing a number of leading European manufacturers.



Results

- Stable platform for the future
- Tighter business controls
- More visibility of trading activities
- Faster, more accessible information
- Queries resolved more efficiently
- Facilitates 'questioning' management style
- Increasing business knowledge
- Easier to maximise sales opportunities
- A set of tools to help grow the business
- Task-driven CRM facilities

The company's extensive range includes products for the adhesives, construction, coatings, filtration, plastics, rubber, textiles and textile coatings industries. Employing around 30 staff, including qualified technical specialists, WhitChem serves around 1,000 customers throughout the UK from its central warehouse in Stoke-on-Trent.

Prior to implementing K8 Manufacturing, WhitChem were using a bespoke, largely in-house developed system, which although functionally well-suited to the business, was based on old, green screen technology. There were issues regarding future support and development, which, if not addressed, might have exposed the business to risks. A new, flexible, fully integrated system was required, which first and foremost, had to be a very good fit with WhitChem's proven and familiar business processes.

WhitChem's management team recognised that they needed a partner which had a proven track record of working in the chemicals sector. Charles Hawley, WhitChem finance director said, "Flexibility and a willingness to go the 'extra mile' to meet specific business requirements were high on our list of must-haves. In addition to stock control, purchasing and trading facilities, our new system also needed to accommodate the requirements for handling and transporting chemicals."

Running a bespoke system had been immensely successful for WhitChem and moving to a standard 'off-the-shelf' product represented something of a cultural change for everyone involved.

"Our outgoing system could be easily tweaked and we were all familiar with process workarounds. No question, the changeover would need to win hearts and minds as well as the process of learning a new system."

After evaluating a number of systems and suppliers, WhitChem chose K8 Manufacturing and placed the order for a 25 user system. After a period of parallel running which was considered to be an appropriate introduction for the new system, K8 Manufacturing went live in January 2013.

// With its modern, windows-style graphical interface we are certainly able to resolve queries quicker, which is good for us, as well as improving the service we give to our customers.



Perhaps not surprisingly, it has taken some time for the benefits of the K8 Manufacturing to come on stream, for WhitChem's staff to 'let go' of the old system and to appreciate the power of a modern functionally-rich solution. "In my role, I certainly appreciate the set business controls that come with an integrated system. Now we have to use the system's disciplines and move on from developing workarounds - which I admit was a bit frustrating for some of my colleagues."

K8 Manufacturing has certainly given WhitChem greater visibility of trading activities and Charles talked about being able to access information more efficiently. "With our previous system, users had become so used to its functionality that there was a sense of carrying out tasks without giving a moment's thought. Now, particularly at management level, we are developing a much more questioning style, not so much knowing the how to do something but why. And that's a big plus."

WhitChem operate in a particularly competitive market and are already finding that K8 Manufacturing is helping the company to make more of every sales opportunity particularly through using the system's CRM tools. K8 Manufacturing is also being seen as a catalyst to increase everyone's knowledge and understanding of what's going on in the business. "With its modern, windows-style graphical interface we are certainly able to resolve queries quicker, which is good for us, as well as improving the service we give to our customers."

K8 Manufacturing has provided WhitChem with a secure and stable platform to help grow the business but at the end of the day, the partnership with Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS) holds the key to moving the company's IT forward as part of its business strategy. "As an IT partner, KCS are easy to work with, they listen to our issues and have provided us with a system that is helping us to progress," said Charles.

Highlights

- Greater visibility of trading activities
- KCS have provided us with a system that is helping us to progress
- Power of a modern functionally-rich solution

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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