

Customer case studies

Construction Specialties

Construction Specialties (CS) UK is a specialist architectural product supplier, based in Aylesbury. Since 1975, it has built a very successful UK operation offering a wide range of products – from entrance matting for shopping centres through to bacteria-resistant wall coverings for hospitals.

“Our solution provides great visibility... we can see where problems are likely to arise and can respond to deal with them before they occur.”

Andrew Cousens
Financial Controller - CS UK



Driving Orders

CS UK previously operated on a Unix platform, as Andrew Cousens, Financial Controller, recalls, “At that time, we took the opportunity to move to Windows; we implemented Access Supply Chain on Windows SQL, also linking into Access accounts package.”

The Access Supply Chain system takes quotes from CS UK’s customer relationship (CRM) software and drives the order process from that point on. “For us, it drives everything from sales order processing, purchase order processing, inventory control, despatch and invoice, before feeding directly into the Accounts for the financial ledger operations,” explains Andrew.

The whole operation is made more complex as CS UK not only sells its range of products to major contractors, but also offers a supply and install service.

“We have two spheres of business. One is supply only, where we just sell to someone else and they then install it.” A significant proportion of this is to door manufacturers, who use CS UK’s products to surround and protect the doors. “In addition to this side of the business, we also supply and install,” explains Andrew.

“The primary customers on this side are major building contractors, such as Carillion, Bovis or McAlpine.” On a large Private Finance Initiative (PFI) hospital deal, the building contractor subcontracts the supply and installation of wall protection to CS UK. To support this side of the business, Access Supply Chain has the capability to run as contracting software. “This gives us the ability to control the jobs, including labour costs and materials costs,” adds Andrew. It really does have broad functionality.”

Industry	Manufacturing
Geographic	Buckinghamshire
Employees	51
Turnover	£6.6m
Solution	Access Supply Chain Dimensions
Modules	Core ledgers Sales orders Purchase orders Works orders Stock control Location & lot control Contract & Job costing Contract billing Time recording

A strong relationship

CS UK's relationship with Access Supply Chain goes back many years. Before the Windows installation, the company used a previous version of the same package on Unix. Says Andrew, "We've been with Access Supply Chain for a long time; we were one of their first customers. We have a really strong relationship with them."

This relationship is strong because of the product quality. "Access Supply Chain combines the benefit of being easy to use, with great accuracy and visibility of what is happening in our business. We can see where problems are likely to arise and can respond to deal with them before they occur."

In a business like CS UK's, every opportunity must be exploited to gain competitive edge - and this includes the business software. "We have been using the software for a long time and have many people here who have remained in the same job. We recognised that we probably weren't taking full advantage of its functionality," says Andrew. So he recently commissioned Access Supply Chain to carry out an in-depth study looking at how best the company could maximise its use of the system and its latest features.

Access Supply Chain spent a couple of days visiting CS UK's site. "The consultant came in and spent time in every department to really understand our processes," says Andrew. The resulting report has been presented and CS UK is in the process of reviewing its recommendations and assessing how best it can implement the changes.

"The report focused predominantly on sales order processing and production," he says. "Areas have been identified where we can really save ourselves quite a bit of time. So it's as much a review of our processes as the way the system supports them."

Reaping the rewards

Andrew is convinced of the benefits. "We have been able to speed up our order entry process enormously," he says. Previously, each operator would check stock availability and highlight requirements to the purchasing department before entering any order. "Now, we can put an order on the system and a picking list will be generated immediately; this will highlight anything that can't be picked and flag it with the purchasing department. It is a much faster and smoother process. Another finding from the review is that CS UK can make its processes much slicker - the business is about to move to online credit checking. "At the moment, every order is checked by someone in our accounts department. An order will only be flagged with accounts if the customer's credit limit has already been exceeded."

Facing the future

For the future, CS UK is faced with increasing pressure on margins, but the organisation is determined to overcome this by widening its revenue streams. "PFI contracts are beginning to appear in the education sector - we know our products are valuable for that market, so this is a key focus for us. Historically, we've concentrated on healthcare but there is absolutely no reason why our business shouldn't expand beyond that in the future," says Andrew.

CS UK is certainly a business that is sharpening its processes to ensure it is in the best possible shape to break into new markets. And with a newly revitalised system from Access Supply Chain to support these processes, it is sure to grasp every new opportunity that arises.

Who we are

Access specialises in the provision of fully functional ERP solutions for medium and large companies. Our modular system will give you a fully connected platform that can be constantly tuned and expanded - now and as you grow. Whether you are a distribution, manufacturing, assembly or service company, we provide cost-effective functionality for every aspect of your organisation.

Our Access Supply Chain ERP solution incorporates both distribution and manufacturing packages. Select the manufacturing modules and you can incorporate any or all of the distribution modules and vice versa. Both packages include fully integrated financials and, to complete your solution, powerful productivity modules are also available.

Further information

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