

Customer case studies

Hammond Expanders UK LLP

Headquartered in Indiana, USA, Hammond Expanders is the world's largest manufacturer of negative expanders. Hammond UK was established in 2000 to pre-blend and ship its products throughout Europe, Africa and Asia - products which are used in a wide variety of battery-based applications including telecommunications and lighting.

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Carolyn Nichols
Finance Manager



Industry	Manufacturing
Geographic	Tyne and Wear
Employees	150
Turnover	£60m
Solution	Access Supply Chain Dimensions
Modules	Core ledgers Sales order processing Purchase orders Works orders Stock control Location & lot control Contract & Job costing Resource Engine (MRPII) Time recording

Staying ahead

With a 60-year history in the manufacturing industry and a worldwide reputation for quality, Hammond Expanders has always kept ahead of scientific developments to ensure its products lead the field. It is this drive to retain market share that led Carolyn Nichols, Finance Manager at Hammond Expanders UK to review the company's business and accounting software.

Carolyn explains, "We knew we needed to change our systems as our business requirements and our hardware had changed – our systems were the only thing lagging behind" Carolyn says. "There were so many new technologies in the market – we particularly wanted to improve our management reporting and our production and distribution planning abilities. Integration was important to us too, along with better help systems for our staff."

A fresh start

The UK division of Hammond Expanders was the result of a joint venture between two companies, Hammond Group Inc and the Calder Group. When Hammond Group bought the Calder Group's share in 2000, Hammond UK inherited an 18-year old legacy system, which used a standard package for financials and a bespoke system for sales order processing and stock control.

With the new business set-up established, it was part of Carolyn's brief to replace the outdated system for one that offered full Supply Chain functionality.

Initial research led Hammond Expanders to Sage as a potential replacement for the software, but Carolyn also contacted a local consultant who introduced them to Access.

The company's US headquarters initially recommended an Oracle database, as used throughout the rest of the Group, but the costs proved astronomical. This outcome proved positive for Carolyn, who comments "we were then able to take matters into our own hands."

Making the change

Carolyn was responsible for selecting the new solution, and had three key items on her wish list. The overriding factor was integration between the manufacturing and accounting functions. Secondly, the package had to address the functionality issues – for example, there was no purchase order processing within the existing system. Finally, Carolyn was keen that the whole company would feel benefits from the system, so insisted that the solution was easy to use.

Access Supply Chain impressed on all three counts, but the integration capacity ensured that Access won the day. "We had a look at alternative vendors, but the integration between the manufacturing and accounts sides of the Access solution really stood out for me."

Professionalism

In addition to these essential software requirements, Carolyn highlights the professionalism of the Access consultants as a reason behind choosing Access Supply Chain: "They are genuine people and we felt comfortable working with them and they clearly had the expertise to cope with what we were asking for. Perhaps most importantly, other vendors had said we would have to accept their software the way it was.

With Access, we were offered an alternative solution with scope for configuration. The consultants were willing to work around us instead and in the end, we only needed a few tweaks to the configuration."

Getting up and running

Using the Access tried-and-tested implementation plan proved a success. Consultants configured test data to fit the day-to-day workflows of the company and then piloted it with the teams, 'walking them through' so that the users were ready to start using the software quickly. Carolyn comments that the transition period was "not long because we were already familiar with the accounting modules in the software."

As a result there was just two to three days between the initial data transfer and the 'go live' date. "Our only real challenge was to get used to a different way of working" says Carolyn. "All the contact details, i.e. customers and suppliers, were transferred by our consultant prior to the changeover so we had no concerns for the integrity of the data."

Achieving targets

Carolyn is delighted with the results of the solution: "I can confidently say we achieved all our goals – and within our set budget too!

Our Access solution has had such a positive impact for us in terms of functionality, significant improvements in efficiency and performance, and has assisted us in growing the business."

Carolyn continues, "Our old system didn't help the user at all – you had to know the product code before you went in the system to find it. We can now get higher quality data – and much more of it – out of the solution. The reporting functionality is also great for devising your own reports – you can tweak things to get exactly the information you need. It's now so easy to find our way around the system to the items we need, as information is so readily available."

Conclusion

Carolyn concludes, "With the help of our Access Supply Chain solution, we've certainly been able to achieve what we set out to do. The initial brief was to find a replacement for our outdated system – and not only have we found the functionality and integration we were looking for, we are confident that our solution plays a large part in our drive to move the business forward."

Benefits

- Flexible solution configured to precise working practices so staff can easily find the data they want
- Implementation methodology ensured a fuss-free implementation with minimal impact on Hammonds' day-to-day working
- Integration between manufacturing and financial ledgers gives staff greater visibility of information, with time savings gained as the need for re-keying data is eliminated
- Addition of reporting facilities gives staff information they need to make better commercial decisions

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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