

Customer case studies

Pobjoy Mint Ltd

In the heart of the Home Counties lies Pobjoy Mint, Europe's largest private mint. The family run business manufactures coins, medals and tokens – ranging from currency for overseas governments and specialist commemorative coins, to tokens for casinos, car washes or vending machines.

“It used to take up to three hours to generate works orders every day, now it takes half an hour.”

Mike Aldridge
Production administration manager



The challenge

Three years ago, it became apparent that the company's business software was struggling to keep pace with the operation. It was clear it wouldn't support the company as it moved forwards. "It was about future-planning rather than fixing something which was broken," says managing director, Taya Pobjoy. "We're a relatively small company but we want to be the leader in our field and we wanted a system which would help push us into the future, with the supplier telling us what we should be doing with it rather than us dictating what we wanted."

Pobjoy's existing system was not Windows based and needed a full time dedicated IT professional to run it and Taya says they were just too dependent on his skills and knowledge.

"We wanted a user-friendly system that anybody coming in from outside would be able to come in and use with little or no training." Mike Aldridge, production administration manager, agrees. "Whilst it had served us well, it had really reached the end of its useful life," he recalls. We had got to the point where it couldn't support the number of users we needed and people had to log off so someone else could do their work. Also the system had become heavily customised, making it more cumbersome and giving us ever-increasing programming costs."

It's common to find, in situations like this, that people compensate for inflexible software by running their own 'micro' systems: "This was certainly what was happening here," says Aldridge.

Industry	Manufacturing
Geographic	Surrey
Employees	40
Solution	Access Supply Chain Dimensions
Modules	Core ledgers Sales orders Purchase orders Works orders Stock control Location & lot control Resource Engine (MRPII) Job costing Time recording Warehousing Alerts Credit card integration CRM Credit control Executive desktop Asset manager Payroll SDK

“We had some people who kept numbers on spreadsheets, others kept information on paper or even in their head, so we weren’t always entirely sure what data existed, or where.”

This made it incredibly laborious and time consuming to produce reports for the business. And without a handle on up-to-date figures, it was becoming more difficult to ensure that efficiency and service levels continued at the previously high levels.

Solution

Pobjoy opted for Access Supply Chain after what Mike calls, “a very professional demonstration.” Key staff were asked to attend demos of a number of systems and to vote for their favourite. Access Supply Chain and one other were shortlisted and the Access system was finally chosen on the basis of price-performance.

Of particular merit was the system’s reporting capability, says Mike: “We could see that the level of data we would have from this software would enable us to become more efficient across the business. With our old system, we had to spend a lot of time and money to get a new report – we could see with Access, that worry would be removed.”

Both Mike and Gill agree that the people from Access Supply Chain were – and continue to be – impressive. “From the first person involved in our system set-up, they have all been extremely helpful and supportive,” adds Westbrook.

A year on, Gill and Mike are responsible for the day-to-day running of the system; something which demands neither all of their time nor specialist IT skills. Gill’s previous systems implementation experience also allowed her to reassure her MD. “I said that we didn’t know how lucky we were with this system; compared to what I had experienced before, the implementation ran extremely smoothly.”

When the 32-licence system went live, there were only a few ‘minor hiccups’, all of which were resolved without any problem.

The transformation has been significant. Access Supply Chain runs all elements of Pobjoy Mint’s operation, from purchasing, to design, manufacture, despatch, and more. “It’s the central thread running throughout the business,” says Mike.

The objective to secure a new, Windows-based system, with added functionality, was met straight away. More than that, however, it has given Pobjoy Mint’s management team vastly improved visibility across the business. “We can see, at a glance, whatever we need to know as managers,” says Mike. “This has improved efficiency because we now have such detailed data at our disposal. But it’s not just the depth of detail, it’s the ease with which we can get at that information.”

“For example, it used to take up to three hours to generate works orders every day; now, with the Access Supply Chain system it only takes half an hour. And the production scheduling and planning data is now available at the press of a button,” says Gill. “Before, it took one person more than an hour every morning just to get the relevant information from all parties and key all that data in manually.”

Another example is the site’s annual stock-take. “In the past, when we returned after Christmas, we would wind down production to allow everything in the stores area to be bonded and counted,” explains Aldridge. “The stock-take could extend to as much as two weeks, costly in terms of time and labour. Now, with Access Supply Chain, we have a running stock check every week; in effect saving us up to two weeks’ lost-production time.”

What’s more, the company’s accountants are very happy and confident in the data that the system produces. And they need to be: with such high value inventory the need for pinpoint accuracy is vital. Pobjoy Mint’s precious metal inventory is driven very much by the price of materials: “Because we have up-to-the-minute information on inventory, it allows us to plan for and respond to, fluctuations in the price of precious metals, which can save us a lot of money,” says Mike.

“We’ve been able to become more efficient, to sharpen our processes: the MRP reports enable us to set minimum stock limits, so that we can be confident we’re not compromising on service.”

Whilst the company still needs support for its IT infrastructure (something it now outsources), there have been significant savings in the cost of running the system.

“Even allowing for Gill’s and Mike’s time, we’re better off because the cost of specialist IT skills and programming alone were more than £100,000 a year - and we’ve saved on training too because Gill and Mike are now able to train new staff on the system themselves,” says Taya.

Access Supply Chain has given a new transparency to the company’s production system eliminating stock-outs and improving performance. Taya says, “We’re producing thousands of different products all the time and you can’t go and check that you’ve got enough blanks, boxes and certificates in stock every time you put an order on. Before we had the Access system, we sometimes didn’t find out we’d run out of stock until it was time to ship. Now, because the system is fully integrated, when you put a new coin on the system, it immediately checks that you’ve got what you need - and if you haven’t, it tells you that you need to do something about it. It’s saved us weeks in delays.”

Concluding, Taya says; “The system has delivered everything we’ve demanded of it so far; we haven’t hit a wall with anything but if ever we did, it is so flexible you can easily add extra functionality if you need it.”

The most obvious benefit of the new system has been the amount of time saved: now, the information the business needs can be produced quickly and easily, meaning that decision-making can also be better and faster. “We work much more efficiently,” says Mike. “We’re a relatively small company in terms of headcount, so this has allowed the expertise we have to be directed to more profitable activities.”

Further information

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