

Customer case studies

S Murray & Co

Medical equipment manufacturers in the UK face many pressures, not least the growing threat of fierce competition from lower cost economies. But one company in this sector that has carved a niche for itself very successfully is S Murray & Co.

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Mark Elton
Systems Manager



Industry	Manufacturing
Geographic	Surrey
Employees	65
Solution	Access Supply Chain Dimensions
Modules	Core ledgers Sales orders Purchase orders Works orders Stock control Location & lot control Job costing

A system under pressure

S Murray & Co knew it had reached the end of the line with its business software. As systems manager Mark Elton describes, the system was almost on its knees. “Back then, the system we were using was totally outdated, largely bespoke and we’d reached the stage where it was crashing frequently. Our existing provider was encouraging us to move to their new package, but we felt that this was aimed very much at larger, blue chip organisations, and it didn’t have the right feel for us.”

Another prompt was coming from our customer base. One of S Murray’s largest distributors, Fisher Scientific, was looking to move to electronic invoicing and S Murray couldn’t meet this requirement without further investment in the software to add that functionality.

So the company looked at what was available on the market, “First and foremost, we needed a manufacturing system,” explains Mark. “We needed something which could duplicate our bill of materials, which we already had in place and move them to a new system. We needed the system to be very user friendly and very accessible – there are no restrictions here, people can look at anything on the system. Our old software didn’t have closed off areas and we wanted something of a similar ilk.”

Evaluating the options

S Murray evaluated several systems in detail, one of which was Access Supply Chain. From the start, the company was reassured. “All contact with Access was very good and their demonstration was excellent. Importantly too, they had a good understanding of our industry,” says Mark.

“Some of the others, both systems and people, seemed to be much more accounts driven. Access Supply Chain had a good understanding of manufacturing processes and this was what clinched it for us – we needed manufacturing to be the primary functionality, not a bolt on to an accounts package.”

So Access Supply Chain was chosen and the implementation began in earnest. It took just over three months to get the system up and running, and Mark says the level of support from Access Supply Chain made the whole process much smoother and easier than he'd anticipated. “We had great support from Access Supply Chain from the start. Their people are constantly in contact with us and, even now, some time later, their support is still superb. I reckon they help us more than they probably need to, they're always willing to help and resolve any problems.”

Smooth implementation

One of the key reasons for the smooth implementation was the system's ease of use. Despite the fact that S Murray had been operating on old-style DOS terminals, the move to a Windows-based system was very straightforward and little training was needed. Mark explains, “I customised some of the screens to ease the transition from old to new. This made the screens even more user-friendly and meant our people were presented with something they would immediately recognise.”

“With the functionality of Form Designer to change the layout and format of the screens, it was easy to replicate the look and terminology of our old package.”

The move to Access Supply Chain also gave S Murray the opportunity to upgrade its technology base elsewhere – such as moving from dial-up to broadband for email and web access. “We really needed this boost and this helped us to modernise our systems across the business,” says Mark.

Now, the electronic invoicing – one of the drivers for change, initially – is very simple, “To produce a comma separated value (CSV) file from an invoice using Access Supply Chain is easy. The work involved on our old system to do that would have cost thousands.”

Across the business, the new system provides excellent visibility for S Murray. “And it's not only the visibility,” says Mark. “A huge benefit is the amount of data we now have at our disposal. Before, if we needed a report based on sales for a particular period, we'd have to apply to the software author and pay for that capability as all reports were bespoke. Now, everything is based on Crystal so it's straightforward – Access trained me so that I can now create all these reports in house very easily.”

Cost-effective processing

The reporting capability saves the company time and money, too – in other less obvious areas. Take stationery, for example. Before the implementation of Access Supply Chain, S Murray spent “an absolute fortune” on three- and four-ply continuous stationery for everything from invoicing, to packing advice and so on. “Now, we just need simple letterhead and the reporting functionality means everything can be created at the push of a button.”

As well as more visibility and comprehensive data, S Murray's processes have become more robust as a result of the new way of working, “It's been a gradual thing,” comments Mark. “We're evolving the business, the processes and the software all together.” One example he cites is that of job cards at the Sheffield factory: for each surgical instrument, a job card used to be raised manually. “Now, they just click on a report field and the information is there – it saves them a lot of time.” This ability to have full product traceability has propelled the business to another level. Being able to obtain full lifecycle traceability on finished goods is invaluable and it's a direction that S Murray is keen to move in. “With our old system, if a fault was found, or suspected, with a particular instrument,

we had to recall whole batches of product. Now, we can isolate the specific lots and when they were made, so we can see exactly where those products have gone. To some extent, we were able to employ some basic traceability before, but it was incredibly time consuming to do – you'd get the instruments back, but probably plenty that you didn't need to recall, as well.”

Mark acknowledges that the company is not yet using all the system functionality on offer. “Access Supply Chain is multi-faceted; it does much more than we require at the moment, but as we evolve we will employ more and more of the features. For example, planning and forecasting is one area that we're keen to explore soon. At the outset, we said we just wanted the functionality to duplicate our old system, but that it should provide a much easier way of working. It has certainly achieved that aim. Now we can pick and choose other elements from the system as we grow and develop the business.”

It's clear that S Murray has a long history in manufacturing, and now that it has blended tradition with new technology, it seems certain of a successful future, too.

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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