

Customer case studies

Timloc

Timloc is a leading UK manufacturer and distributor of building products, mostly for ventilation and damp proofing.

Formed in 1968, Timloc products are manufactured and stored at its site in Goole, East Yorkshire. UK-wide builder's merchant, Jewson, is a key customer.

"The reporting capability is great, it's so flexible. As time goes on, we find we want more and more information – but now this is easily available."

Davin Coleman
Finance Director



The challenge

Timloc doubled the scale of its business in four years due, in the main, to a number of major successes with large chains of builders' merchants. It was clear the business needed to reassess its operations – some processes had developed to cope with the surge in business, but these systems weren't sustainable to take the business forward. And topping the list for action was the software system.

Davin Coleman, Finance Director, comments, "Our old system had been in place since the late eighties. It was a DOS-based solution and very unstable. It used to crash fairly frequently and there was no chance of extracting any useful data from it."

Part of his remit as the new FD, therefore, was to find an alternative solution and manage the implementation. "But it wasn't just a case of replacing our system with a more robust version - we were looking for a strong manufacturing system, and were refining our manufacturing processes to embrace best practice. We wanted a new software solution to reflect this.

It had to have strong Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP) credentials," says Davin. Without MRP functionality in the existing software, Timloc's operations manager relied on holding most of the crucial information in his head. "Clearly, this left us exposed to significant business risk and we wanted to

Industry	Manufacturing
Geographic	Yorkshire
Employees	45 – 50
Turnover	£6m
Solution	Access Supply Chain Dimensions
Modules	Core ledgers Sales order processing & invoicing Purchase order processing Works orders Stock control Location & lot control Resource Engine (MRP II) Product configurator

remove that risk by introducing a system that could take the intellectual property and store it effectively.”

The solution

There was one solution in particular that Davin wanted to investigate. “Access was a product I’d come across previously, in another organisation. I had it in my mind that this could be just the type of system we were after,” says Davin.

Access was evaluated, along with three other products. “We could see immediately that Access was very much a manufacturing-derived product, which was exactly what we were looking for. It was also vital the chosen system was easy to use. The overriding objective, though, was MRP – that was essential. We weren’t interested in running accounts and sales order processing as separate entities; the new system had to be all-encompassing and had to link seamlessly throughout every process. Access was the perfect answer.”

While system capability was key to its selection, the cost of Access was also fundamental to the decision. “It’s competitively priced for what is effectively the same functionality as others offer. Some systems were two or three times as expensive for the same functionality. Access really is way ahead of the others when it comes to overall implementation and cost of ownership,” he recalls. “They don’t send a huge team in for months on end; that’s part of the reason we liked them.”

Teamwork

All the Timloc employees were taken with the friendly and approachable nature of the Access consultants. “They don’t send a huge team in for months on end; that’s part of the reason we liked them,” says Davin. “We’re a very close-knit company and some of

the consultants from other software suppliers seemed to cast a very critical eye over our operation. It would doubtless have been a much more rigid and formal approach, which wouldn’t have suited us. Access were incredibly open throughout the process and it didn’t phase them at all that some of our people weren’t computer literate at the start. The way they do business really appealed to us.”

A smooth implementation

When the project started, the pressure was on to move to the new system as soon as possible. “The old software system was creaking so much, it was becoming a really pressing business issue,” says Davin.

Davin was Timloc’s project champion; with his efforts and those of the Access team, the pre-implementation work went “very smoothly”. Key users were taken to the Access office for training; subsequently the Access consultant worked on site at Timloc to continue the training and help overcome any issues. Davin carried out some of the system piloting himself and found this highly beneficial. “Rather than doing it all for you, the Access team help you to carry out some of this work yourself. That was a huge benefit for me. As a consequence, I got to know the system very well before we went live. I know how it was set up, how the data sits in the system, and how to install it on a new machine, for example.”

The switch across to the live system took place a few months later. We were problem-free within weeks, which is pretty amazing,” says Davin.

Reaping the benefits

Just a few months later, the benefits started to roll in. Sales order processing is more efficient. “We saw improvements in that

immediately,” says Davin. Also, the much-anticipated MRP benefits are making a real difference. “We now have MRP running, our operations manager is using it and it’s giving us solid data to work from. It’s made the process so much faster for him – now, he can raise his purchase orders and works orders based on real data, rather than trying to calculate requirements in his head. It’s given us an extra control that wasn’t there before.” Another objective was to improve availability of reporting. That, too, has been achieved. “The reporting capability is great, it’s so flexible. As time goes on, we find we want more and more information – but now this is easily available.”

Timloc’s customer service record is exceptional and, says Davin, “With Access, we’ve effectively eliminated the risk of not being able to meet our customers’ orders on time. Our next-day service is vital to this business so stock accuracy is critical. With all the data we need at our fingertips, we no longer have to rely on a storeman spotting an empty shelf. The system has sharpened our user processes and we are much more efficient – this means staff can spend more time on value added activities in the factory rather than running around checking stock levels.”

For the future, Timloc has to sustain its service capability in order to fend off competitors. Like many manufacturers, its margins are being squeezed and it has competition from lower cost economies. It is the unerring drive for service excellence that sets Timloc apart, and now, with Access, the company is confident that it has the edge on technology too.

Further information

For further information on this, or any other Access case studies, please telephone us on 01206 322575, email case-studies@theaccessgroup.com or, alternatively, visit www.theaccessgroup.com/downloads/case-studies.aspx