

# Customer case studies

## Kern

Formed in Switzerland in 1947, the Kern Group has gained a unique place in the document management sector. Kern Limited was formed in 1983, it currently employs over 115 staff and has a HQ in Fareham, Hampshire.

“Our investment has proved very good value for money, paying for itself in 12 months based just on labour cost savings.”

Sandra Richardson  
Finance Manager



<b>Industry</b>	Mailing & packaging
<b>Geographic</b>	Hampshire
<b>Employees</b>	101-200
<b>Turnover</b>	£11-20m
<b>Solution</b>	Dimensions FocalPoint
<b>Modules</b>	Core ledgers Purchase order processing Sales order processing & invoicing Invoice register Credit control Stock control Serial number tracking Bill of materials Costing/project management Payroll SDK Purchasing Reporting Timesheets Expenses

### The challenge

Kern has been using Access Dimensions since 2002, and from an accounting viewpoint, the solution met the company needs. However, as Kern continued to grow, the burden of manual timesheet submission and input caused issues with the accuracy and timeliness of project data.

### Complex needs

Like many manufacturing and service companies, the majority of Kern's costs are in labour. Over 90 per cent of Kern's staff are field engineers, who manually log time to each project, which is then translated into a cost and allocated to its relevant database within the financial system. Sandra Richardson, Finance Manager comments, "Accurate and timely processing of labour hours into the costing ledgers is of key importance

to us. Furthermore, reporting needs are complex due to the differing contractual arrangements, covering for example, overtime and callout costs." A dedicated staff member spent much of their time entering and re-entering an incredible 22,000 manual timesheet entries each year, a job that needed to be done meticulously to avoid errors.

### Time consuming

As well as the need to improve overall efficiency, Sandra was aware of the postal and filing costs associated with paper timesheets. And as well as being time consuming, the information within the system was always out of date since the data could never be updated quickly enough. By insisting on an electronic system that would update in real-time, Sandra knew that greater visibility into the processing cycle would be

achieved, speeding up approvals and payment – and in turn, providing a better service to the staff by giving the company much more up-to-date information. Sandra saw Dimensions' web-enabled suite, FocalPoint, demonstrated at her Access Dealer's user day and realised this was the solution she had been looking for.

### **The solution**

After a period of consultation, Sandra chose FocalPoint timesheets and expenses modules. Being web-enabled, Kern engineers would be able to enter data through a browser while off-site, and automated alerts could be set up for approvals, before being sent directly to the costing ledgers for efficient processing.

### **Company-wide acceptance**

The system has dramatically changed company working practices and attitudes, something Sandra attributes to its ease of use. "We have been delighted with the acceptance FocalPoint has received from our engineering staff, some of whom had limited experience of computer technology. They found it so easy to use that within two weeks of the training, they had fully accepted the new way of working."

### **Customisable**

A key strength of the solution is its ability to be customised to fit specific working practices. Sandra cites this as another key factor in the system's acceptance, commenting, "FocalPoint has delivered preconfigured, easy-to-use timesheet and expenses entry screens."

In addition, the system is based around logical workflows to speed up business processes, something

that Sandra finds of prime importance, "The approval workflow is prompted by the software, meaning that approvers are proactively notified so that they can process quickly, typically within 2-3 hours."

### **Meeting the requirements**

The solution has met all Sandra's requirements – and the figures speak for themselves. The number of manual data entries has reduced from 22,000 to 3,000, a 90 per cent reduction in labour hours as a direct result of integration between the core ledgers and the timesheet and expense entries. "We're 'greener' too," Sandra comments. "There have been significant savings in stationery expenditure as well as elimination of the cost of mailing paper copies to the office and filing them."

### **Further benefits**

FocalPoint has also provided excellent return on investment. Being web-enabled, the cost per user licence makes it financially viable to roll the timesheet functionality out across the entire organisation. Sandra comments, "Our investment has proved very good value for money, paying for itself in 12 months based just on labour cost savings." In addition, bringing web enablement to the desktops of many more users has changed working practices positively – and has, in turn, "contributed to a big culture change within the workforce and opened up the opportunity for continued growth."

### **Who we are**

Access will give you the advice, tools and clarity you need to make effective decisions, quickly and with certainty. As both a business-focused consultancy and a

specialist software developer, we combine our innovative software with practical experience to deliver a solution that's exactly right for you and your business.

You can rely on us to provide you with a solution that's simple, proven and relevant to your company. We have over fifteen years' experience of developing software here in the UK and our regional consultants have tailored and implemented this software all over the UK and Ireland. The expertise we've gained gives us an unbeatable ability to accurately assess your needs and deliver maximum impact with ease and confidence.

We believe your solution must be ready for the future, as well as right for today. Because your business will constantly evolve, we provide a software solution that grows with you. Our modular software covers a complete range of business, financial and administration processes and can be flexed to give you the precise view of your business that you need at any time.

Our supportive consultants combine their first-class software expertise with in-depth industry knowledge to constantly improve and simplify your business processes so that your solution delivers maximum value and a continual return on investment.

With Access, you can be sure you've got the clarity you need to reach your business goals.

### **Further information**

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