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Product lifecycle management



# IT Shortlist 2011



# Take your pick

Brian Tinham: [btinham@findlay.co.uk](mailto:btinham@findlay.co.uk)

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*Shortlist 2011* is our annual reference directory of IT systems, software, ICT consultancy and service providers. Our objective in this special issue is to make your task of defining, finding and shortlisting IT suppliers as fast, easy and effective as possible.

We start, however, by taking soundings on the kinds of systems and approaches needed in these changing times. It's not going to be easy, so on page 24 you'll find our examination of what analysts, consultants and your peers in manufacturing believe must be considered, as organisations continue to bear down on costs while also preparing for growth.

One word stands out, and that word is 'agility'. It's a very big word. What some management teams are crying out for is a system simultaneously capable of handling extremes of manufacturing style. Others want a solution designed from the outset for easy reconfiguration to support new opportunities. And others just want functionality to help them resolve unpredictable conflicts – caused by late customer changes, production or supply chain failures.

For the latter, popular solutions today remain APS (advanced planning and scheduling), web-based SCEM (supply chain event management) and production management add-ons. However, when it comes to the former two, you're into the functionality required of core, manufacturing-centric ERP, and the best policy is due diligence.

In essence, however, what most manufacturers want is the ability to deliver better customer fulfilment, whatever happens, without incurring additional cost. That is a tall, but increasingly important order, driven by the increasing complexity of doing business in manufacturing – itself caused by the pressures of global markets, more complex products and relentless competition.

Quite simply, modern IT needs to deliver better results, faster – first, through rock solid automation, and, second, by assisting managers in every aspect of the business, but probably starting with the factory.

Best advice is to look to operational management systems – not just MES (manufacturing execution systems), but often relatively simple alerts, reports and analytics. These are typically the Cinderella suites, yet information from the coal face can be key. Then revisit your ERP, followed by business intelligence, CRM, demand forecasting and supply chain management – and review your engineering PLM (product lifecycle management) and design thinking, with a good dose of lean.

As for shortlisting the products themselves, your first port of call is opposite on page 23: the alpha list by function. Look for the functionality you require to find appropriate suppliers for your shortlist and then go to the pages indicated.

Starting on page 29, you will then find details on key providers of solutions, systems and services. Everything is covered: from providers of ERP systems to supply chain management systems; APS to PLM; and plant and factory controls to shopfloor data capture systems.

Finally, remember the *Manufacturing Computer Solutions* website at [www.mcsolutions.co.uk](http://www.mcsolutions.co.uk). It's a key adjunct to the annual in-print *Shortlist*, providing searchable information access, as well as news and reference material.

Brian Tinham BSc CEng MInstMC FSOE FIPlantE  
Technical editor

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# So you want a new system?

Last month's IT roundtable event, organised by this journal in London, provided system seekers with useful food for thought.

Brian Tinham mulls over the meat

In some senses, selecting a new ERP system is easier than ever. Sadly, however, in other ways business leaders will experience quite the reverse. Why easier? Firstly because, following the scale of consolidation in the mainstream IT sector (as we go to press, yet another of the big boys, Lawson Software, is falling to the Infor stable), there are relatively few organisations and systems to choose from. So, quite simply, shortlisting shouldn't be quite such a nightmare.

Secondly – and just as importantly – the relatively few remaining ERP suites cover the vast majority of business requirements as standard, so project groups should be able to focus solely on testing potential solutions' support for what they believe makes their company special. And thirdly, most operational and business teams have been around the block of major system purchases and upgrades before, so they're sufficiently IT savvy to know what they're looking for and the pitfalls to avoid.

One serious snag, however, is that while ERP and other major systems have long since reached maturity, manufacturers now need more. When any technology becomes more or less available to all, it's no longer a game changer; it's just part of the level playing field.

Hence, today, a key requirement for many projects is that a new system can support what's loosely termed 'agility' or 'flexibility'. That can mean an ability to handle extremes of manufacturing style (for example, multi-mode or from pull to push). Equally, it can imply little more than functionality to help resolve unpredictable events – such as late customer changes and production or supply chain failures – generally handled, for example, by APS (advanced planning and scheduling), web-based SCEM (supply chain event management) and production management add-ons. Either way, the objective is better customer fulfilment.

However, increasingly, manufacturers are also starting to mean a system designed from the outset to be capable of easy reconfiguration, as needed, to support whatever unforeseen opportunity might be coming down the line. And that's much more difficult.

More on this point later, but on the customer fulfilment front, analyst IDC sees this as probably the number one

**Oxford Engineering's Karim Sekkat: finance and production systems must be integrated**



current requirement for manufacturers, particularly those in the western world. Speaking at an IT roundtable event organised by WMM in London last month, Pierfrancesco Manenti, director of IDC's manufacturing insights division, pointed to its latest global study among manufacturing SMEs, aimed at understanding how post-recession challenges were impacting IT.

"One of our key findings was the increasing complexity of doing business in manufacturing, caused by the enormous pressures of global markets, complex products and competitive markets. That's the same for small and large organisations – but for SMEs the issue is they don't have the resources," he said.

For Manenti, part of the solution is sorting out the differences between complexity and complication. The former is just the way it is, he explains, while the latter is largely self inflicted and receptive to improvement by, for example, integrating disparate systems to provide universal, real-time information, and simplifying business processes. That said, his view is that modern IT needs to handle complexity by assisting managers in achieving what matters most – fulfilling customer requirements, not only capacity nor even excellence in production and product.

"The factory is where customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is created, so manufacturers need to go



back to their roots," he advised. "Our study shows that manufacturers see themselves as good at MOM [manufacturing operations management], but intending to invest in new systems to achieve further improvements." That's on top of planned investments in demand planning and forecasting, and supply chain management systems.

Manenti believes that investing in MOM solutions is nothing less than a survival issue, precisely because of its laser focus on ensuring happy customers by enabling real-world manufacturing flexibility. He also notes that, in the end, it's crucial to the notion of aligning IT with what the business patently needs – as long as other key software systems, including transactional systems, are also in place. And those include, in rank order, ERP (for which IDC's survey shows satisfaction and ROI figures improving significantly), followed by business intelligence (BI), then surprisingly manufacturing execution systems (MES), CRM, demand forecasting, supply chain management and, fairly low down the list, product lifecycle management (PLM).

PLM's relatively poor standing in the hit parade, Manenti explained as: "In these hard economic times, customer retention is important and innovation is less important." Which is clearly not sustainable: but that's another story and something else for business leaders to mull over as they consider how best to prioritise software acquisitions.

***Last month's roundtable event showed that IDC research findings mirrored manufacturers' experiences***

Just how closely IDC's analysis fits with real SMEs became clear around the table, as manufacturers outlined their current concerns and tentative spending plans. The precise language may have been different, but the messages were effectively identical. Just about everyone, it turns out, needs more support for flexibility; better, more real-time and joined-up information that specifically links financials with production and the supply chain; and simplified HMIs (human-machine interfaces), especially on the shopfloor.

Incidentally, many were also rueing the day they signed up for what turned out to be fundamentally limited 'ERP' systems. And others again lamented the problems that resulted from committing the cardinal sin of changing their ERP code – in the mistaken belief that the system could be bent to better match their processes, and then still be upgraded when the need arose.

Crystallising the argument for integration, Oxford Engineering CEO Karim Sekkat said: "The financial system is our source of accuracy, but CEOs also need information from the shopfloor, because [the data] is different. That's where you can see the impact of issues such as waste, returns, rejects and customer fulfilment. Without it, you have no visibility... So financial and production systems have to be integrated; otherwise you get information too late to make informed decisions."

He cited any board's clear requirement to make investment and innovation decisions for the mid- to long-term. "If you take a high risk strategy, then you need to know whether it's paying off or not. If you don't align data on the shopfloor with the financials you might think your supply chain, for example, is performing badly, when in fact your missing components have been sitting in goods-in for a week."

But for Sekkat there is more to this than integration. Another key aspect is education. Another is finding systems that can genuinely handle multi-mode manufacturing. And yet another is that all-important agility. Referring to his logistics example, he said that Oxford Engineering solved the education, information flow and process issues by implementing a manual visual system.

That sounds extreme, until you hear that he also needed to introduce single piece flow (integrated into the supply chain) on high-value bespoke products for customers such as Siemens and Carl Zeiss – and that his existing ERP system couldn't cope. Meanwhile, his system remains stubbornly resistant to handling multi-mode manufacturing – self evidently lacking the agility that Oxford demands of it.

**"ERP implementations are dependent on the people on the shopfloor responding properly and accurately recording what happens"**

*Rod Clarke, Rickinghall Executive Consulting*



To Rod Clarke, director of Rickingham Executive Consulting, the difficulties identified are not particularly new. "In the best ERP implementations, the software is seen as creating an opportunity for the business to drive operational improvements. But that's all dependent on the people who do the real work on the shopfloor responding properly and accurately recording what happens, because that's what drives the physical product and information flows."

The problem, he said, is not that ERP systems don't work and support good levels of connectivity – 20 years ago they didn't, but today they do. The issue, he insisted, is that organisations generally face inadequate or poorly used operational systems (MOM) and, as a result, there is little or no useful connection into financials from the real world.

Solving this, according to Chris Needham from the government's Manufacturing Advisory Service South East, is about analysing, streamlining and simplifying processes before you select, much less implement, new software. "The best systems we see are those where management has set the IT and business strategy, and deliberately removed all aspects that could make it go wrong, and then followed that up with good training."

All that said, Samir Sekkat (Karim's brother and IT advisor to Oxford Engineering) had another take on some ERP systems' inability to directly support business decision making. "Most [ERP] systems are built around processes, whereas management would like to have systems built up around decisions. These systems were not conceived around decision flow, which makes it very difficult to get the information they really want – even if they can integrate them – and even more difficult to get the agility they say they want, on top."

It's a moot point, and many might argue that's one of the reasons for the success of add-ons such as APS and BI, geared to operational and management decision support respectively. Equally, there is an argument for focusing attention on the 5%-20% of processes and information flows that really merit the attention – not attempting to get wholesale integration supporting automated processes and decision support.

And there is another way. Philip Stride, commercial director with Microsoft partner eBECS (which specialises in manufacturing ERP and sponsored the IT roundtable), suggested that, while older ERP systems "didn't talk", most reputable ERP systems today allow users to 'drill down' and gather information on any event. "Our system, for example, has the ability to manage processes, but then managers can go in at any point and work out the links – whether it's information about the supply chain or finance."

Returning to the issue of system agility, however, Neil Genders, production control manager at kitchens manufacturer KWP Interiors, gave two versions of his wish list. On the one hand, he lamented the fact that no system is likely to be adaptable enough to solve the problem of late



**"The factory is where customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is created"**  
**Pierfrancesco Manenti, IDC**

and changeable orders that ignore suppliers' lead times. On the other, he wondered if there are systems flexible enough to be expanded to take on production for other very different firms – in his case, following an acquisition.

Karim Sekkat believes not: "When you go live with a system, you think of it as your new Ferrari but, seven years on, it's not a new Ferrari any more. I have yet to see a salesman of any ERP system who can show me that what I now want is already in my [old] ERP system."

Is that too much to hope for? Stride insisted that some ERP systems do come close. "At the highest level, Microsoft Dynamics, for example, is designed to offer a vast range of options. So users can select from the list and configure the system for their needs. Below that, instead of bespoke code or integrating external applications, this system allows us, and other Microsoft partners, to develop [compatible]

functionality specifically for, say, an industry requirement."

His points? Firstly, when Microsoft delivers a new version, only its kernel changes so all the extras follow an easy upgrade path. Secondly, the system is always ready to be flexed to

changing requirements as they arise – and with the benefit of a very large pool of functionality.

However, the last word goes to Clarke, who suggested that a lot depends on the degree and nature of flexibility you are likely to want. "The issue of agility is different from a business perspective than from an IT perspective. Software companies may say they have a tool that can configure the system to meet the business requirements – and while that wasn't true 20 years ago, it is now. But what many businesses mean is that in, say, five years' time, they might need to run their companies very differently.

"Experience shows that when you come to implement any system, a lot of time, effort and cost is not in buying the software and configuring it: it's in testing, training people and implementing it. So, even if you're lucky enough to find a system that can theoretically cope with your new requirements, you will still have to go through the testing, training and implementing stages. I don't think we're likely to see a system that instantaneously adapts to, say, a new business sector."

Clearly, selecting any major business system requires an organisation to gaze into an uncertain future. But second guessing what may be right for you in a decade is a fool's game. So the key points to watch include: current technology status; existing approach to flexibility; and the likelihood of your preferred IT supplier still being around in 10 years. ■

*Don't miss the next IT event, the cimForum: see p16 for speaker details or go to [www.cimforum.co.uk](http://www.cimforum.co.uk)*

# Factory smart box

*For operations directors and managers concerned about factory challenges, ERP does not provide the only answer, according to Jeremy Harford*

**A**re you a production manager worrying about how to get a better handle on OEE, in terms of resource and/or labour utilisation? Do you need to improve recording of process compliance or materials traceability? For that matter, are you concerned about upping the ante on production status and WIP tracking, or quality, scrap, rework and yield reporting – either to help drive continuous improvement or simply to streamline data collection for regulatory purposes?

If so, you're probably scratching your head, pondering the considerable cost, complication and management interrogation that invariably precedes any suggestion of extending any ERP system... Even more so, if you're contemplating a separate MES (manufacturing execution system) implementation.

But Jeremy Harford, director at manufacturing specialist Mestec, insists there is a better, simpler, quicker and far less costly way. He observes that such common factory requirements are among the functions that ERP promised but, more often than not, failed to deliver. However, he argues that, precisely because of the costs and numbers of stakeholders involved in ERP, that's not the way to go. Equally, given the fact of MES functionality having long since been subsumed into ERP, neither is MES.

For him, what's required is a separate, out of the box solution that can be quickly configured, rapidly deployed and easily integrated to any ERP system, if required – which is exactly what his company offers ([www.mestec.net](http://www.mestec.net)). Just as important, though, he suggests that factory managers need to prioritise their wish lists, install one component and swiftly prove the value before moving on down the list.

"You can think of our product as a suite of standard components, each designed to solve common critical factory issues," explains Harford. "So operations people can pick off one challenge at a time, using one of the components, get rapid value and only move on if they need more. Everything can be integrated, so that information is entered once only. And we can easily hook into any ERP system, providing, for example, labour and materials consumed information, so that the system can show product or project costings to finance, based on real-time data."

What's more, he says that Mestec's factory components can fix shopfloor problems in as little as two days and for figures around £4,000. That's a far cry from the tens of thousands of pounds commonly associated with OEE or time and attendance systems, or indeed multi-media, paperless workbenches – all of which are also in the Mestec shopping

basket. Additionally, if it helps, components can be 'hosted' offsite, via the cloud and Mestec's database service.

"For example, if an operations director wants to implement OEE reporting, we can simply install our factory touch screens where they're needed and hook them up to the existing network – or install a wireless or mobile network, if that's a better solution – to link to the central unit," explains Harford. "Then we would configure the screens in manufacturing's language for the specific job, link up to barcode or RFID scanners, if required, sort out the workflow and do the training. Operatives then automatically enter the data, and managers get their reports and dashboards on any PC or portable device, exactly as they want them – showing real-time and historical manufacturing KPIs, trends, etc."

It's much the same for quality tracking, where management needs to understand yields at particular points in the production process. With the Mestec touch screens in place, operators simply select reasons for failure, with fault codes against product variants, works orders, etc. The component then tracks the passes and fails, and reasons against product type, operative, and so on, providing consolidated information on the dashboard to assist management decision making around continuous improvement, remedial action and more.

"Attempting to do that in ERP is too expensive, not least because all factories work in a different ways, so then you're into consultants. That's one of the reasons it's so rarely done during the initial ERP implementation. And that's why there are so many paper- and spreadsheet-based workarounds that break the information flows, cause errors, consume resource [in terms of data collection and management] and result in poor decision making." ■



**Mestec's Jeremy Harford: prioritise wish lists and address one challenge at a time**

mestec

## top ten components

- OEE (resource utilisation)
- OLE (labour utilisation and labour hours)
- Time and attendance, and timesheets
- Production status and WIP tracking
- Quality tracking, and scrap, rework and yield recording
- Stock tracking and management
- Multi-media and paperless workbench
- Flowline, network or asset-centric workflow
- Process compliance and regulatory traceability
- Food industry initiatives



## 123insight manufacturing enterprise management

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*For every type of industry and process)*

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*(But all the help you need)*

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*(12 awards in 4 years)*

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Take a look at our **60 Second Briefing video** on [www.123insight.com](http://www.123insight.com) for more on our manufacturing enterprise management software and the unique way we do business.

Once you've satisfied yourself that 123insight could be suitable for your business, book yourself on one of our free Evaluation Workshops, held regularly around the UK, to find out why it has won a dozen awards in the last four years.

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123insight is an award-winning system that is designed to address the flaws in traditional MRP/ERP system selection and implementation methods. Available since 2000, the system is provided for a low monthly rental fee with no contract or penalties, and is supplied complete, not in modules. We publish transparent pricing on our website and offer regular, free 2 ½ hour evaluation workshops which are held across the UK, allowing you to check the suitability of our product. You can book staff on training courses at no risk – if you do not wish to continue just walk away. Only six days of training are needed. Rather than be drawn into a lengthy evaluation process that can really cost you significant amounts time and money, many companies decide to try 123insight. Our risk-free approach allows you to be up and running with a minimum of fuss and financial outlay.

**Guy Amoroso,  
managing director**



#### Company Profile

**Offices:** As above

**Activities:** 123insight eliminates the high risk of failure associated with traditional ERP/MRP systems, setting new standards in usability and capability. 123insight is provided on a no-commitment, monthly payment plan with no obligation training, and covers all of your MRP, ERP and CRM requirements, including Sage & Pegasus interfaces and tight integration into Access Dimensions accounts software (also available from 123insight).

**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:**

Principally direct but dealers and business alliances are being established across UK, Europe and the rest of the world.

#### Industrial Sectors

All manufacturing types, styles and sectors, including aerospace, automotive, engineering, electronics, textiles, food, medical, plastics, furniture, packaging, oil, water, defence, subcontract engineering, subcontract electronics.

#### case study

ANM Electronics was founded after a previous company failed due to the recession. It knew that to be successful it needed to implement an ERP system. Having used an AS/400 system which had several limitations at his previous company, managing director Richard Mollison was sceptical when evaluating new

#### User Profile

Customer profiles from 3 to 800+ personnel, with multiple factory/office locations and international, including project or contracts, one-off, small batch, high volume repetitive, make-to-stock, engineer-to-order and make-to-order, process, discrete, subcontract and capital equipment – and any combination.

#### User References

CSI, Corintech, Systech, DRM Industrial Fabrics, ANM Electronics, FisherCast, AGW Electronics, Butser Rubber, NIBSC, Jarvis Manufacturing, Thermal Engineering, Canyon Europe, Image on Food, Global Invacom, Mantec, Cobra UK Automotive, Lascar Electronics, Cobra Design Centre, RH Technical Industries, Percival Aviation, Geotechnical, Bitbox, Polyseam.

#### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Microsoft .Net architecture; Windows XP/Vista/7; SQL databases.

**Training & Support Facilities:** Six days of

training required on a no-obligation basis. You only pay when proceeding with implementation. All training documentation provided in electronic format for easy, customer-driven downstream training. Fully inclusive telephone support, remote assistance and upgrades within the monthly payment plan.

#### Applications/Products

**Manufacturing management:** 123insight is an advanced manufacturing enterprise management system: a true .Net software application based on Microsoft's SQL, delivering simplicity for day-to-day operational use. It is everything that you would expect, from initial estimates and quotes, through sales and purchasing, full stock and manufacturing control, despatch, invoicing with accounts integration and interfacing options, plus CRM. CRM in 123insight terms is more than managing client or customer relationships, it is an entire 'communications' and 'workflow' capability that can streamline and control all business processes and procedures.

systems. After selecting 123insight the company went live in just three weeks. MRP ran in minutes instead of hours, and there was a considerable reduction in stockholding. A year after going live the company has only called for technical support four times, all of which were resolved over the phone

immediately. Richard Mollison said: "In terms of ROI, it's pretty much instantaneous. The low monthly rental saves a wage every month, so it pays for itself. I was not expecting to get the whole system for the price quoted." ANM has recently been nominated as one of the fastest growing companies in Wales.

**www.123insight.com**

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Access Supply Chain, part of Access UK, specialises in manufacturing and distribution solutions for small, medium and large companies. The Access Supply Chain software solution is a modular system that can be configured to fit any business environment and way of working. From aerospace to pharmaceuticals, and food to engineering, we treat our clients as individuals – providing effective solutions for their short- and long-term objectives. From ordering raw materials to delivery of finished goods, we offer a single, seamless solution to strengthen business processes, improve management reporting and increase profitability. Our system has excellent functionality and flexibility, and combines all the advantages of a standard package with the fit of a bespoke solution. Implementation is controlled using a proven and highly dependable 10-step implementation plan, which ensures that the project is delivered on time and within budget.

**Neil Rushby,  
supply chain  
divisional manager**



#### Company Profile

**Employees:** 325

**Offices:** 9

**Parent/Holding Co:** Access Technology Group

**Activities:** The Access group of companies supplies and supports business systems for global organisations. Access Supply Chain specialises in providing, maintaining and supporting flexible manufacturing, distribution and accounting solutions.

**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:** Direct sales and implementation through Access UK.

#### Industrial Sectors

Our customers span a wide range of industrial sectors, including automotive, aerospace, electrical, electronics, engineering, food and drink, flooring, furniture and kitchens, metal processing, medical and pharmaceuticals.

#### User Profile

Manufacturing and distribution solutions for small, medium and large companies. Single or multi-site. Make-to-order, make-to-forecast, make-to-stock, mix-mode manufacturing.

#### User References

Acrastyle, Ascari Cars, Cromer Crab, Crosby Kitchens, Hall's Flooring, LycoRed, Pasta Concepts, Pobjoy Mint, Sound Leisure, and Ugo Foods.

#### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Windows, SQL Server and web-based.

**Training & Support Facilities:** Training centres at all main offices.

#### Applications/Products

**Supply Chain Management:** multi-location stock control, traceability, warehouse management.

**Manufacturing management:** product configurator, job costing, quotations, POP, SOP, works orders, BoM, scheduling, production/capacity planning, engineering change control, Windows Mobile.  
**Shopfloor:** time recording and shopfloor data capture.  
**Distribution:** warehouse management, location and lot control, CRM, forecasting and demand planning.  
**Financial:** multi-currency ledgers, credit control, cashbook, payroll and HR.

We provide turnkey solutions with hardware and IT infrastructure, implementation and customer service plus lifetime system support.

#### case study

Fast-changing technology and an expanding business led juke box manufacturer, Sound Leisure, to introduce a new supply chain solution. With one clear view of components, the company can now analyse information across the entire business in real time, increasing accuracy and significantly reducing administration. Mike Black, director of production and logistics, explains: "The Access

system gives us a clear historic view of components installed in all Sound Leisure products – which supplier they came from and details of compatible replacement items where components have gone end-of-line.

"We have been greatly impressed by the capability to analyse information across the entire organisation in real time; the centralised data and reduction in paperwork

will save us a day a week across the business," he says.

Thanks to clear planning, these benefits have been realised at all levels. "Staff are very enthusiastic... if it gives them an extra 20 minutes a day just to take a look at what's going on, that's great because it means they're better informed when they speak to customers."

[www.theaccessgroup.com](http://www.theaccessgroup.com)



# COLUMBUS IT



**Microsoft** Partner  
Gold Enterprise Resource Planning



## COLUMBUS IT

# The world's leading Microsoft Dynamics ERP provider for Manufacturers

Columbus IT specialise in Microsoft Dynamics ERP for the manufacturing and distribution sectors. We have a team of highly skilled consultants with deep-rooted industry knowledge and have successfully implemented over 5,000 globally.

With customers in over 100 countries, Columbus has won the most partner awards from Microsoft globally. Columbus has a proven track record in providing low risk implementations, fast return on investment and exceptional customer service.

Columbus helps Manufacturers and Distributors to:

- Increase Operational Efficiency
- Provide Insight into Business Intelligence
- Collaborate across Supply Chain
- Improve Customer Service
- Increase Competitive Edge
- Reduce the Cost of Compliance

**AMR Research**  
DISCRETE MANUFACTURING  
*Industry Certified*

**AMR Research**  
PROCESS MANUFACTURING  
*Industry Certified*

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**Icon Business Centre, Lakeview Drive, Sherwood Park  
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Tel: 01623 729977  
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Columbus IT specialises in Microsoft Dynamics ERP for manufacturing and distribution organisations. The company has a team of highly skilled consultants with a deep-rooted knowledge of the industry with over 5,000 successful implementations globally.

Microsoft Dynamics ERP is an integrated and adaptable ERP solution that fits in with existing IT systems and is in a familiar Microsoft environment that makes it easy for all employees to use. Columbus and Microsoft Dynamics ERP helps you improve operational efficiency, provide business insight, collaborate across your supply chain, improve customer service, increase your competitive edge and reduce the cost of compliance. Columbus has won the most partner awards from Microsoft globally. Columbus has a proven track record in low risk implementations, fast return on investment and exceptional customer service.

**Mary Hunter,**  
managing director



**Company Profile**

**Employees:** over 900  
**Turnover:** £80 million  
**Offices:** UK head office in Nottingham and 30 offices worldwide  
**Activities:** Columbus specialises in Microsoft Dynamics ERP for the manufacturing and distribution sectors – helping companies improve their efficiencies, profitability and enabling them to support growth by improving the overall visibility of their business, empowering them to forecast trends and act faster to stay ahead of the competition.

**Industrial Sectors**

Manufacturing (discrete and process) and distribution sectors including food and beverage, aerospace and defence, high-tech, industrial equipment manufacturers, chemical, agri, consumer products, plastics and packaging.

**User Profile**

Columbus works with manufacturers ranging from medium-sized single site companies to large multi-site multinational organisations which are looking to improve their operational efficiency.

**User References**

Over 5,000 customers including Origin Enterprises, Masstock, Progress Rail Service UK, Fairfax Meadow, Elliott Group, Aliaxis, Rich Products, Garmin, Sunlight, SSI Schaeffer and Naturex.

**Services**

**Quality Standards:** Microsoft competencies include Gold Enterprise Resource Planning, Silver Business Intelligence, Prince2, Microsoft SureStep implementation methodology, AMR badge for discrete and process manufacturing.

**Industrial Standards:** Microsoft Windows, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Web Services, SharePoint, Microsoft .NET.

**Training & Support Facilities:** On-site, off-site and e-learning training. Columbus IT offers the largest dedicated Microsoft Dynamics support team in the UK.

**Applications/Products**

**Microsoft Dynamics ERP – AX and NAV,** providing solutions for:  
Product data management  
Factory/plant/shopfloor systems  
Process industry systems  
Enterprise systems  
Planning/scheduling  
Time & attendance  
Consultancy services  
**Microsoft Dynamics CRM**  
**Microsoft Business Intelligence** (Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Office, and Microsoft Office SharePoint technologies).


**case study**

Aliaxis is a multinational group of manufacturing companies which produce plastic products for fluid transport, supplying to its key market segments of building, sanitary, industrial and utilities. It has around 300 companies in its stable worldwide, including eight in the UK, the most recognisable of which is probably Marley – a manufacturer of

plumbing and drainage products.  
One of the problems facing Aliaxis was its disparate IT systems which couldn't communicate with one another. This meant the business couldn't easily collate information, report on activity or share business intelligence with others, either in the UK or at group level.  
Through the implementation of Microsoft

Dynamics AX and industry expertise of Columbus, Aliaxis can now standardise processes to support all the business functions in the UK, meaning it's easier to train staff and support the platform. Aliaxis now has access to meaningful and accurate information that can be utilised throughout the business.

**www.columbusit.co.uk**



## Outgrown your ERP System?

As the economy recovers and your business grows, will you be restrained by your current ERP system?

Business requirements are constantly changing and the requirements placed on your software solutions will constantly evolve. Don't let your ERP system hamper your business or be a constraint on your growth.

EFACS E/8 from Exel Computer Systems offers continuous product development to provide you with a solution that will keep pace with emerging industry standards and trends. It is this ability to grow and adapt as your business requirements change, that ensures future-proofing of your investment.

**EFACS E/8**  
...the integrated business solution

Tel: 0115 946 0101  
Fax: 0115 946 0606  
[www.exel.co.uk](http://www.exel.co.uk)  
[sales@exel.co.uk](mailto:sales@exel.co.uk)



**Bothe Hall, Sawley, Long Eaton  
Nottingham NG10 3XL  
Tel: 0115 946 0101  
Email: sales@exel.co.uk**



Exel Computer Systems plc is a leading UK software author which has been developing, implementing and supporting business software solutions from its offices in Nottingham for over 25 years. With hundreds of successful implementations and thousands of users around the world, Exel's customer base spans industries as diverse as food, aerospace, engineering, automotive, electronics, packaging and companies with a field service requirement.

EFACS Enterprise is a fully integrated browser-based ERP solution built using the latest technology including Java and the Oracle database. It redefines the way a business solution operates within an organisation, by combining unparalleled levels of corporate-wide functionality with rapid implementation times and lower cost of ownership.

Eagle Field Service is a complete service and mobile management solution providing real-time information to field engineers, direct to their mobile or touchscreen device.

Engineers can access and relay information directly to the back-office management system, ensuring unification of company-wide data.

**Rue Dilhe,  
managing director**



### Company Profile

**Offices:** As above

**Activities:** UK author, designer and developer of EFACS, a fully integrated ERP business solution and Eagle Field Service, a complete service and mobile management solution providing real-time information and resources to field-based engineers.

### Industrial Sectors

Discrete manufacturing, aerospace, general and sub-contract engineering, automotive, furniture, building, electronics, pharmaceutical, food, valves, packaging, forging, plastics, cosmetics, rubber, fabricated products and field service providers.

### User Profile

Businesses ranging from those with

traceability and engineering change management, through to high-volume schedule-driven component manufacturers requiring lean methods. Companies with requirements for managing remote engineers.

### User References

Naim Audio, GB Kent, Bennett Opie, Harlow Group, Gesipa, Haigh Engineering, Wesley Barrell, Martin Aerospace, Metsec, Selex Communications and AJ Barber.

### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Browser, Java and XML based. Runs on Linux, Unix, Microsoft and systems supporting Java, Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, single-server to multi-tier computing.

**Quality Standards:** Exel is committed to the provision of products and services that are fit for purpose and conform to customers'

requirements and accreditations.

**Training & Support Facilities:** Experienced implementation team providing project management, consultancy, training and support via onsite, remote and dedicated training facilities.

### Applications/Products

**ERP:** EFACS

**Supply chain management:** EFACS

**Manufacturing management:** EFACS

**Data/document management:** EFACS

**Production engineering:** EFACS

**Shopfloor systems:** EFACS

**Field Service Management:** Eagle Field Service

**Business Intelligence:** EFACS

**Touchscreen Applications:** EFACS and Eagle Field Service

**CRM:** EFACS and Eagle Field Service.

### case study

Harlow Group is a UK manufacturer of precision sheet metal components, products and electro-mechanical assemblies. Like most established metal fabricators, Harlow has had to adapt to meet ever changing customer requirements and as such, needed an ERP system that would fully meet all of its business challenges. With the scope of

business challenges including batch sizes ranging from single items through to tens of thousands, working on up to 1200 works orders at any given time and meeting growing demand by customers to have their orders quicker alongside their standard kanban orders, the right ERP system was imperative. Since investing in EFACS E/8, Harlow has

benefited from the way the system has enabled the company to grow, expand and adapt to ever changing business pressures. With an estimated 80% improvement in document management efficiency, EFACS has had a positive impact on both the day-to-day running of the company and also the strategic direction of the business itself.

[www.exel.co.uk](http://www.exel.co.uk)



Experts in Microsoft Dynamics

**Enterprise House, Bridge Business Centre  
Beresford Way, Chesterfield S41 9FG  
Tel: 01246 888 555  
Email: info@ebecs.com**



**Kevin Hall,  
group CEO**

eBECS is a specialist in the design and delivery of solutions for manufacturing, distribution and the extended supply chain. Our solutions are multi award-winning and we are internationally recognised for our success in delivering Microsoft Dynamics solutions.

eBECS delivers world class lean and agile business solutions using Microsoft Dynamics AX, Dynamics CRM and Business Intelligence. Our solutions streamline and integrate processes, minimise waste, optimise the supply chain and manage demand-driven operations.

A selection of recent awards and accolades includes:

- Microsoft Dynamics UK Reseller of the Year 2010
- Microsoft Inner Circle Partner 2010
- USA Microsoft Dynamics Implementation of the Year 2007
- EMEA Microsoft Dynamics Implementation of the Year 2007

eBECS has joined forces with Microsoft to establish the Lean Centre of Excellence ([www.LeanCOE.com](http://www.LeanCOE.com)) which serves as a collaborative facility for organisations looking to utilise the lean capabilities within Microsoft Dynamics.

### Company Profile

**Offices:** United Kingdom (Chesterfield, London), North America, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and China

**Activities:** eBECS is a specialist in the design and delivery of solutions based on Microsoft Dynamics, Dynamics CRM and Business Intelligence for manufacturing, distribution and the extended supply chain.

### Industrial Sectors

eBECS specialises in the discrete manufacturing, distribution, food service, automotive, medical device and equipment, health and building products sectors.

### User Profile

eBECS delivers world class lean and agile business solutions to organisations of all sizes using Microsoft Dynamics AX, Dynamics CRM and Business Intelligence.

### User References

Our clients include Aston Martin Lagonda, Team Lotus Formula 1, Marshalls, Tarmac Building Products, Yuasa Battery Europe, JJ Food Service, Kab Seating, plus many more.

### Services

**Industrial Standards:**  
Microsoft Windows, SharePoint, SQL Server, Web Services, Microsoft .NET.

### Quality Standards:

Microsoft Dynamics UK Reseller of the Year, Gold Certified Partner, Prince2, Microsoft SureStep implementation methodology.

### Training & Support Facilities:

eBECS has training and support local to each of the country offices.

### Applications/Products

Microsoft Dynamics AX  
Microsoft Dynamics CRM  
Zap Business Intelligence (BI) for Microsoft Dynamics.

## case study

Marshalls, the UK's leading manufacturer of superior natural stone and innovative concrete hard landscaping products, has benefited from an eBECS implementation of Microsoft Dynamics AX as follows:

- Fully integrated barcoding provides a 72% stock management time saving
- Reduction in system support costs achieved

- a 20% saving in administration costs
- The system created a single 'face' for customers across the business, allowing Marshalls to exploit cross-selling opportunities
  - Full stocktakes are completed over a weekend rather than over a two-week shutdown
  - Single centralised system deployed with a

'localised' approach has given group management 'one version of the truth' about the performance of the business for powerful and immediate decision-making.

Paul Thomas, group information systems director at Marshalls, says: "We chose Dynamics to fit with our business strategy to grow the company through acquisition."

**[www.ebecs.com](http://www.ebecs.com)**



**The Old Grain Store, 14 The Green  
Trentham Road, Nuneaton CV10 0SW  
Tel: 024 7699 8661  
Email: infowm@factorymaster.co.uk**



FactoryMaster is a dedicated manufacturing software solution, designed and developed for all companies which manufacture anything, of any size, in any quantity. FactoryMaster provides the perfect platform for companies to improve their processes and performance, in a controlled and measurable way. The solution hosts extensive functionality and features, which are tailored to meet all sizes of manufacturing companies. The system can be implemented as a package or a bespoke modular system, to suit the needs and requirements of the customer.

FactoryMaster places major emphasis on offering consultancy advice to its customers to ensure the system will be implemented quickly and efficiently, ensuring it addresses each specific customer's needs and specialised area of manufacturing. FactoryMaster doesn't just sell the solution, but forms a relationship with each customer, working towards a joint goal of success and continual improvement.

**Brian Graham,  
sales manager**



#### Company Profile

**Activities:** Material requirements planning solution for all manufacturers of all sizes.

**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:** UK partners and a variety of international partners in the following countries: Ireland, Hungary, Romania, Australia, USA, India, Malaysia, Turkey, Estonia, Poland, etc, with an ever growing presence outside these countries.

#### Industrial Sectors

FactoryMaster's solution covers all manufacturing industries including: aerospace, automotive, oil & gas, nuclear, defence, electronics, plastics, precision engineering, pharmaceuticals, food & drink, medical.

#### User Profile

Ranging from 2 to 1000+ personnel, single or multiple sites, process and batch manufacturing, just in time, agile, rapid, flexible and lean manufacturing, etc.

#### User References

Collis Engineering, MB Aerospace, Fourayes Farm, Abbey Metal Finishing, Paramount Precision, Submarine Manufacturing & Products, Cogsdill Engineering.

#### Services

**Industrial Standards:**  
Microsoft.Net, Windows XP/Vista/7, SQL databases.

#### Quality Standards:

Final phase of ISO 9001:2008 certification, Microsoft Certified Business Partner Specialist.

#### Training & Support Facilities:

Our project managers have extensive production experience in a wide variety of industries and their expertise and consultancy is supplemented by on or off-site training tailored to suit the needs of each individual business.

#### Applications/Products

**Manufacturing management:** FactoryMaster is an integrated material requirements planning solution, designed and developed for ease of use but with extensive features and functionality embedded throughout. It covers all areas of the manufacturing process, estimating, sales and purchasing, stock and manufacturing control, scheduling, employee timesheets with data capture, invoicing with accounts integration, CRM and everything in-between.

FactoryMaster's quality module and advanced inspection procedures lead the field.

**Supply chain management:** The solution enables effective control and management of all suppliers, raw materials, work-in-progress, stock control, and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption, with a high level of emphasis on traceability.

#### case study

Techman Engineering, part of the multinational SBO group, specialises in the machining and manufacture of an impressive array of oilfield products and tooling. Since 2004, Techman has experienced rapid growth, putting a massive strain on its existing production control systems. It quickly became apparent that the

incumbent legacy system couldn't cope. In particular it highlighted the lack of visibility of available capacity and the inability to create costings for actual versus planned work. The FactoryMaster solution was implemented and fully operational within six months. Non-IT workers were able to pick up the user friendly

system quickly. Techman has seen a timely return on initial investment, and is continually reaping the benefits of FactoryMaster. Mark Rooker, total quality manager, stated: "Full traceability and automation of the system has saved countless hours and reduced the risk of human error."

[www.factorymaster.co.uk](http://www.factorymaster.co.uk)

# WHY YOUR BUSINESS SUCCESS DEPENDS ON AGILE ERP.



## RESPONSIVENESS.

Increasingly, only companies that can adapt to rapid changes in the business environment will succeed. Whether it is managing fluctuations in their supply chain, handling new customer demands or reducing time to market, they are on the ball. So how do they do it? They have the support of an ERP solution with the agility to keep pace with their thinking, so they can rapidly introduce new ideas, products and processes. IFS Applications does more than enable better, more efficient business. It makes constant change your ally.

**IFS - FOR AGILE BUSINESS**

➔ Read more at: [www.ifsworld.com/uk](http://www.ifsworld.com/uk)

**Artisan, Hillbottom Road  
High Wycombe HP12 4HJ  
Tel: 01494 428900  
Email: info.uk@ifsworld.com**



IFS develops, supplies, and implements IFS Applications, a component-based extended ERP suite built on SOA technology.

When we first set about creating IFS Applications over 25 years ago, our goal was to make the most usable business software on the market. To help us achieve that ambition, we put simplicity at the forefront of everything we did. We decided that we would make only one product, which can be easily configured to match the specific requirements of a broad range of industries. IFS Applications is built on open standards so our customers are not locked into any particular technology. The service oriented component architecture of IFS Applications means it can be easily extended and updated. Each software component is totally compatible with every other, yet capable of running independently, therefore IFS Applications is an agile product that handles change and long-term evolution with ease. All in all we believe that IFS Applications is the most user-friendly business software on the market.

**Paul Massey, MD,  
IFS Europe West**



#### Company Profile

**Employees:** 300 in the UK and 2,700 worldwide  
**Turnover (UK):** £30m (worldwide over \$350m)  
**Offices:** Worldwide in over 50 countries  
**Parent/Holding Co:** IFS AB, Linköping, Sweden  
**Activities:** IFS provides business-wide ERP software that allows organisations to become more efficient and manage their resources in a more agile way  
**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:** IFS supplies directly and partners with global market leaders.

#### Industrial Sectors

Aerospace & defence, automotive, construction, contracting & service management, energy & utilities, food & beverage, high-tech, manufacturing, process industries, retail, wholesale and supply chain.

#### User Profile

IFS is an agile solution for companies of various sizes, from medium-sized single site companies to large, multi-site, multinational organisations.

#### User References

Babcock, Bristan, Bristow Helicopters, BSKyB, Butcher's Pet Care, Camera Dynamics, Chingford Fruit, Clancy Docwra, CryoService, Imerys Minerals, Olympus KeyMed, Portsmouth Aviation, Ultra Electronics PAS, William Grant & Sons.

#### Services

##### Industrial Standards:

RDBMS: Any Hardware and OS supported by Oracle.

Extended Server: Windows Server, AIX, HP-UX, Linux RedHat, SunOS/Solaris.

Client: Windows 2000/XP/Vista/2003/2008.

#### Training & Support Facilities:

IFS offers consultancy, training and support, as well as a structured implementation methodology, supported by tools such as role-based training, instructor-led and self-study online, business process modelling tools and lifecycle management tools. Support is provided in the UK.

#### Applications/Products

**IFS Applications:** User-friendly ERP software that makes your business more agile. IFS Applications is a single, integrated product supporting the management of four core processes: Service and Asset, Manufacturing, Projects, and Supply Chain. Combined with our deep industry knowledge and software for critical business processes such as financials and HR, it is a complete ERP solution that lets you turn business challenges into business opportunities.

#### case study

Innovation and new product development are key strengths at packaging manufacturer Linpac Allibert, alongside the capability to provide total supply chain support, including RFID tagging, asset tracking, tray washing and repair, rental and asset management services. Andre Ertel, project manager at Linpac Allibert, describes why the business selected IFS:

"There were three competitive advantages that IFS had over their competitors. Firstly, we liked the fact that their software solution fits our requirements, without the need for major modifications, and could be installed off-the-shelf. This made the system easy and fast to install. Secondly, their component architecture was a strong selling point, as it allowed us to

scale up over time and create a system to suit our changing requirements. Finally, working with a medium-sized supplier also meant that we had a more personal relationship with IFS than we could have with their larger competitors. This proved to be a significant benefit, as they became a trusted partner as our business changed over time."

[www.ifsworld.com/uk](http://www.ifsworld.com/uk)

# A New Broom?

## 10 signs it's time to rip out and replace ERP

The one constant in life is that things change. Take manufacturing for example – once the bedrock of British industry, globalisation has forced the sector to transform, as it competes with younger models from far flung shores for a place on the world stage.

Operational excellence is a prerequisite of competing in global markets. Yet according to research commissioned by Infor and undertaken by IDC Manufacturing Insights, manufacturers state their organisations to be more, or significantly more complex than they were five years ago, hindering this quest.

The role of technology is cited in the research as a vital tool in combating complexity and achieving operational excellence, but, it seems cracks are starting to appear in the capabilities provided by an ageing portfolio of ERP systems.

According to the research, 62.3% of ERP systems in Western Europe are at least five years old, with 18.7% 10-15 years old, and a further 7% more than 15 years old. Given that most ERP systems have a lifespan of between five and seven years, it's perhaps not surprising that ERP is creaking at the seams.

Even five years ago, never mind 15, systems were implemented to support a range of functions and processes which have since evolved. New priorities have moved to the forefront, which are challenging functionality and driving manufacturers to question how much longer systems are sustainable.

But with operational cost cutting ranking highly as a strategic priority over the next two years, the first step in answering such a question should focus on how existing ERP systems can be reconfigured to help to optimise functionality. However, as legacy systems move closer to becoming obsolete, and fall short of facilitating the flexibility to help manufacturers exercise agility, when is the right time to replace ERP?

### 1 Are you asking the right questions?

When looking at future profitability, asking "how can I afford to replace my ERP system?" can only be answered fully through simultaneously asking "how much longer can I afford NOT to replace my existing ERP system?"

**2 Do you recognise yourself?** It might be that 10 years ago, you had a single location and one factory. However, as a result of several acquisitions, the company may now operate globally from a number of factories, with an extended product range. If change on this scale has taken place, it is likely that the system is being pushed beyond its limits.

**3 Is a heavily customised, legacy environment restricting operational excellence?** A legacy system may not be able to handle the increasing complexities inherent within Bills of Material (BOMs), engineering changes, purchasing, production scheduling and traceability – all of which are integral to profitability.

**4 Is your downtime going up?** If heavily customised systems which can no longer be supported are causing extensive downtime, how much productivity is being lost?

**5 Are you trying to fit a square peg into a round hole?** If you find yourself adapting business processes to fit your ERP system, rather than the other way around, it might be time to review.

### 6 Can you always meet customer and supplier requirements?

If your ERP system lets you down when it comes to sharing information and collaboration, this is unlikely to be sustainable in an era where, according to IDC's research, customer fulfilment is the number one priority.

### 7 Do your systems speak the same language?

If disparate legacy systems can't communicate directly, and require manual resource to amalgamate information, this unnecessary step risks errors and eats directly into the bottom line.

### 8 Is your organisation spreadsheet dependent?

If the spreadsheet remains king, it might be time to consider a system which can reduce reporting time, freeing up valuable resources to focus on strategic decision-making.

### 9 Can you manage bids and projects profitably?

Bid and project management is cited in the research as a priority initiative for the next two years, yet respondents feel that their ERP systems fall short of supporting it. If you empathise with this problem and your ERP system inhibits your ability to streamline bid and project management, it's time to remove this stumbling block.

### 10 Do you panic at the prospect of new legislation?

In an era where regulation reigns, it goes without saying that systems must be equipped with sufficient flexibility to accommodate requirements. If the thought of implementing new regulatory changes causes you sleepless nights, it's probably time for a rethink.

**INFOR**™

To read the full report: Beating complexity, achieving operational excellence by IDC Manufacturing Insights, go to:

[www.infor.co.uk/idc-manufacturing-insights](http://www.infor.co.uk/idc-manufacturing-insights)

**The Phoenix, Central Boulevard, Blythe Valley Park  
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Infor is a leading provider of business software and services, helping 70,000 customers in 125 countries improve operations and drive growth. Infor delivers business-specific software to organisations of all sizes around the world, recognising that companies want software that is simple to buy, easy to deploy and convenient to manage.

Infor believes that manufacturers should be focused on serving their customer, controlling costs and growing revenue, not struggling with their ERP systems. Therefore we provide innovative technology that preserves your investment in ERP for the long term, making it easy to connect to specialised applications required by your business and giving the flexibility to adapt systems to your unique business needs.

**Phil Burgess,**  
director – UK sales



### Company Profile

**Employees:** 8,000 worldwide

**Turnover:** £2 billion worldwide

**Offices:** Direct offices in 125 countries; implementation and support in 100+ countries.

**Parent/Holding Co:** Privately owned, Infor's majority shareholder is a private equity company called Golden Gate Capital.

**Activities:** Infor solutions are developed, installed and supported by people who know your industry. Infor's ION technology provides a simple way to integrate and manage your applications – on-premises, in the cloud, wherever you do business

**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:** Global technology, solution and channel partners.

### Industrial Sectors

High technology, industrial equipment and machinery, aerospace and defence, automotive, general manufacturing, chemicals, distribution, hospitality, food and beverage, consumer packaged goods, public sector.

### User Profile

With 35 years of experience, Infor solutions support discrete and process manufacturing.

### User References

Atlantic Inertial Systems, CAV Aerospace, Filtronic, Pilkington Automotive, Herman Miller, Johnson & Johnson, Cadburys, Oliver Valves, Promethean, Hadley Industries, Sandvik Mining & Construction, Amey, British Sugar.

### Services

Localised support with global service backing: 3,500 product specialists and 1,400 sales and professional service partners.

**Quality Standards:** Infor helps users to meet standards from ISO9000 to FDA. ISO 9001:2000 implementation methodology. Microsoft Gold Certified Partner.

**Training & Support Facilities:** Infor offers on-site and offsite training worldwide. Support and training in 20 languages, plus a 24x7 collaborative community called Infor365.

### Applications/Products

Infor ERP; Infor PLM; Infor PM (Performance Management); Infor SCM; Infor EAM (Enterprise Asset Management); Infor FMS (Financial Management System); Infor CRM; Infor HCM (Human Capital Management); Infor ION.

### case study

The Automation Partnership, the market leader in the design and development of advanced cell culture automation systems for the life sciences industry, has successfully deployed Infor ERP SyteLine. The solution will support a shift from discrete production to batch manufacturing, while facilitating growth, and boosting productivity in a growing market.

A change in customer buying habits forced The Automation Partnership to change its business model. Rather than one-off large machines, which could take up to two years to

build and one year to install, it now produces smaller cell culture machines in batches of five to 10 which take around two months to make.

The company needed an ERP solution to support this new business model and chose SyteLine, which can adjust quickly to changes in demand across a broad product portfolio. SyteLine facilitates 360 degree visibility of customer orders, enabling them to be consistently and continuously tracked and delivered on time. The ability to fine tune the ERP system meant that the specific needs and

preferences of personnel across finance, purchasing, engineering and production could be met easily. The overall change management project took six months and the SyteLine implementation was delivered on time and to budget.

Alan Graham, IT manager, says: "SyteLine provides us with the resilience and flexibility to respond to market changes in the future, while at the same time supporting our current need to stay productive, meet customer demand and grow our business."

[www.infor.co.uk](http://www.infor.co.uk)

# Is Javelin on Your Radar?



## Software For All Your Manufacturing Needs

The Jobshop production planning and control software has been developed to be an effective tool for companies working in the manufacturing industry and includes functionality, such as Product release approval (FAIRs), Contract Costing & Control, Sales EDI, Purchase Order Authorisation, Document Management, Batch Traceability and Part Issue Control

[www.jobshop.planit.com](http://www.jobshop.planit.com)

0116 272 5700 | [Jobshop@planit.com](mailto:Jobshop@planit.com) | [www.jobshop.planit.com](http://www.jobshop.planit.com)



**8 Warren Park Way, Enderby  
Leicester LE19 4SA  
Tel: 0116 272 5700  
Email: [jobshop@planit.com](mailto:jobshop@planit.com)**



Javelin is a flexible, scalable and intelligent production planning and control system offering advanced functionality and value in the key areas of manufacturing and assembly. It allows SME organisations to successfully compete in difficult economic and market conditions, through direct productivity improvements and lower IT infrastructure costs.

Javelin supports direct interfaces to the best of breed accounts packages, protecting investment in existing systems and can easily be integrated with new peripheral systems. It has been developed, implemented, trained and supported by our experienced and knowledgeable staff; and our success has been as a result of supplying a solution that helps customers reduce costs and maximise productivity.

**Paul Holmes,  
general manager**



#### Company Profile

**Employees:** 300

**Turnover:** £25 million

**Offices:** Leicester, Ashford, Bath, Reading, France, Germany, China, USA

**Parent/Holding Co:** Planit Holdings

**Activities:** Javelin develops advanced manufacturing and process control software. It provides customers with the software tools to get the most from their manufacturing environment.

#### Industrial Sectors

Aerospace and defence, automotive, medical, electronics, sub-contract manufacturing and general engineering.

#### User Profile

Javelin is designed to meet the needs of a wide selection of manufacturing businesses

from SME to large multinational, multi-site organisations.

#### User References

Aish, Gardner Aerospace, JJ Churchill, Arrowsmith, Iona, Oxford Engineering and HSBC.

#### Services

**Quality Standards:** FAIR's Monitoring

**Industrial Standards:** Crystal Reports, Microsoft Windows, Microsoft SQL Server.

**Training & Support Facilities:** Javelin has dedicated modern training facilities across the country and can also offer custom on site training. It is supported by an experienced and knowledgeable team of support engineers based in the UK.

#### Applications/Products

Estimation and quotation, sales order processing (SOP), MRP, purchase orders, works orders, shopfloor data capture, inventory control, costing, quality control, sales EDI, comprehensive reporting, FAIRs, links to best in breed accounting packages, CRM link.

#### case study

Aish Technologies is a private limited company engaged in the development, manufacture and support of advanced electronic and mechanical systems used on land and sea.

The company implemented Javelin's manufacturing and production control software to integrate all its systems and reduce lead times.

"We are using the latest design and manufacturing tools and adopting lean process techniques to improve operational effectiveness," explains managing director Ed Bates. "Our engineering and manufacturing teams have a wealth of experience in both naval and land systems gained from working on major projects either directly for the Ministry of Defence or in

partnership with major customers like BAE Systems, Thales, VT, DML, Babcock and Raytheon Systems."

"Once we went live the Javelin system significantly improved our scheduling of work," says information systems manager Paul Hardwick. "We have better utilisation of capacity and reduced WIP."

**[www.jobshop.planit.com](http://www.jobshop.planit.com)**



**Baltimore House, 50 Kansas Avenue  
Salford, Manchester M50 2GL  
Tel: 0161 876 4498  
Email: syspro@k3scs.com**



**Andy Latham,  
managing director**

For more than 30 years SYSPRO ERP has been the leading enterprise business process application for small and medium-sized manufacturers and distributors across a wide range of industries. Every day, SYSPRO ERP empowers thousands of users at over 14,500 installations in over 60 countries.

We are renowned for delivering solutions that can be easily and economically incorporated into your business. It's a reputation built on the unrivalled experience and knowledge of our people – and on many years of implementing manufacturing systems.

SYSPRO ERP gives you the technology to manage your supply chain from end to end. Its modular structure lets you choose the functionality you need right now and to add extra capability as your business changes and grows.

### Company Profile

**Turnover (UK):** £10.39m UK and Europe

**Offices:** Manchester, Dereham, Abingdon, Hook, Edinburgh, New York, Dublin and The Hague, Netherlands.

**Parent/Holding Co:** K3 Business Technology Group plc – turnover £43.83m

**Activities:** K3's manufacturing division supplies, installs and supports SYSPRO's Microsoft-based ERP software to manufacturing and distribution businesses. Combined with an in-house managed services and cloud division, this ensures a full one-stop business solution.

### Industrial Sectors

Single or multi-site manufacturing and distribution SMEs, including aerospace, automotive, pharmaceutical, electronics, food & beverage, machinery, medical devices, plastics & packaging, furniture and fabrication.

### User Profile

SYSPRO is ideal for companies that seek to improve efficiency and production performance.

SYSPRO provides powerful tools for each stage of order management, planning, manufacturing and distribution processes.

### User References

A J Wells, Astute Electronics, Boss Design, Dantec, Dawson, Dewhurst, GW International, HRM Boilers, Prism Electronics, QV Foods, Power Adhesives & Packaging Aids, Radius Systems, Tyneside Safety Glass.

### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Microsoft: Windows, SQL Server, Exchange Server, Citrix and Terminal Server; Unix, Linux, Web Services, SOA, 32/64 bit, Client/Server Architecture, Microsoft.NET

**Quality Standards:** Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, PRINCE2, ISO27001

**Training & Support Facilities:** K3 offers customised, on-site or classroom-style training and professional helpdesk support from a team of experts. K3 Care is a strategic cross-company initiative that focuses entirely on the wellbeing of all customers and regular contact is

maintained with customers. In addition, K3's managed services division offers complete peace of mind for support and maintenance of IT infrastructure. As one of Microsoft's largest UK channel partners, we have the knowledge and capability to help organisations do more with their investment in IT.

### Applications/Products

SYSPRO: fully integrated business software, incorporating modular applications for ERP, advanced planning and scheduling, customer relationship management (CRM), supply chain management, business intelligence and analytics, financial, warehouse management, HR management, document management and inventory management. SYSPRO e.net provides complementary and easily deployable applications, with no need for updates. SYSPRO BusinessLive Cloud provides ultimate flexibility: there is no upfront investment, you pay only per user, per month. It gives you all the performance and functionality you need to deliver rapid business results.

### case study

A SYSPRO business system from K3 is underpinning the manufacturing, warehousing and distribution for GW International, a leading UK bakeware manufacturer. GW replaced its ageing ERP system with SYSPRO in January 2006. The new system helps to manage the business as a whole, covering MRP, ordering,

production, warehousing, distribution and accounting. SYSPRO was the key to providing the right information to allow GW International to meet the varying needs both internally and externally. GW has identified many benefits from K3's solution: "The degree of data we can extract is phenomenal, we can see exactly

what is going on throughout the business," says Tina Carswell, commercial director. GW has recorded some interesting facts following the implementation of SYSPRO including 25% stock reduction, 100% improvement in stock accuracy and 50% reduction in sales administration tasks.

**www.k3scs.com**



**Alexander House, Station Brow  
Leyland PR25 3NZ  
Tel: 01772 641133  
Email: sales@qisoft.com**

# QISOFT

QISOFT is an international company with an established global customer base. With 25 years of practical experience, listening to, understanding and managing customer requirements, our products have proven to be highly consistent and perfectly suited for a wide range of industries and applications. Our real-time MES and Enterprise Manufacturing Intelligence suite is a powerful link between product, process and people. Highly advanced yet easy-to-use statistical analysis help transform the vast amount of data collected throughout the manufacturing process into the insight needed to optimise performance across production operations. It has the capability to analyse and measure production efficiency (OEE), improve real-time process monitoring with SPC & SQC tools (for both real-time and continuous process improvements) and provide visibility of this across the enterprise.

**Kelly Hardy,  
global sales &  
marketing director**



### Company Profile

**Employees:** 18

**Offices:** UK, Netherlands, USA, plus European distributors in France and Spain

**Activities:** QISOFT's Manufacturing Application Suite combines real-time MES and Enterprise Manufacturing Intelligence (EMI). What was once a disconnected group of independent, data-generating systems can now be brought together to achieve a more complete view of operations through a single source.

More importantly, QIS analyses that data and produces reports for the entire enterprise. It is not isolated to just one area, but addresses the needs of the whole organisation, whether manufacturing or business focused, from shopfloor to top floor and across each level.

### Industrial Sectors

Our products suit a wide range of industries, but key sectors include: pulp & paper, food & beverage, consumer products, board, chemical, coating & converting.

### case study

St Regis Paper is one of the largest paper and packaging producers in the UK. Prior to QIS installation, plant control included both automated and manual processes that were time consuming and often retrospective. To ensure product was within specification there was a tendency to produce overweight material, incurring higher fibre, chemical and

### User Profile

Manufacturing industries based on continuous production processes face distinctive production management challenges. With recipe-based bills of materials, multi-level batch traceability and flow-rate optimisation, our software has been developed over time to meet these challenges and is ideal for the process manufacturing sector.

### User References

Arjo Wiggins, DeLaRue, Unilever, Friesland Campina, SCA, Weyerhaeuser, Sara Lee, St Regis, James Cropper, TFP, SWM.

### Services

#### Industrial Standards:

Microsoft Windows, SQL Server, Microsoft.NET

#### Training & Support Facilities:

- On-site and off-site training worldwide – covering everything from installation and set-up to statistical analysis and process understanding.

- 24 x 7 x 365 days a year support via telephone or email.
- Website support section for downloads, knowledge base and fixes.
- Ongoing product development and upgrades based on customer feedback and changing market needs.

### Applications/Products

**Enterprise Manufacturing Intelligence:** QIS / SRM / EnterpriseLink

**Manufacturing execution systems:** QIS

**Data/document management:** QIS

**Shopfloor systems:** QIS / QR2 / Walkabout / CheckWeigh

**Interface management:** LabLink / ProcessLink.

energy costs. Once installed, QIS provided real-time data from manufacturing processes and timely feedback of key parameters. Quality information variables are monitored across the mill and ProcessLink and LabLink connections facilitate the collection of data both manually and automatically via links to third party business and process systems. In the first

eight months, QIS brought savings of over £100,000 in fibre and chemical costs. Also, reel data enabled non-conforming material to be precisely pinpointed, resulting in lower waste and downgrade level. Higher productivity also resulted from faster machine speeds made possible by closer control of wet end conditions.

**www.qisoft.com**



## **Straight Ahead for Straight Forward IT Business Solutions**

Pinnula has years of experience working with and supporting small and medium sized businesses in the UK and overseas. Does your business need to;

- manage and control costs
- improve control of production and resources
- meet and exceed customer expectations
- analyse and report trends
- get the best out of your infrastructure and keep it secure

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**No 1 The Point, Bradmarsh Way  
Rotherham S60 1BP  
Tel: 01709 839933  
Email: sales@pinnula.co.uk**



Pinnula provides a full consultancy service from initial contact and business review right through to the implementation and delivery, while working in partnership with your company to model your organisation's IT needs and requirements and full after-sales support.

Pinnula is the owner, author and developer of Uniplan, a sophisticated yet easy-to-use modular ERP system and UplanIT, an advanced scheduler matching supply and demand to first class business performance. Pinnula is also a reseller of DI Diver, the best in business intelligence, and ESET, the award-winning end point security system which complements the product set along with infrastructure and hardware support. After sales support is provided by a dedicated account manager and the UK-based support desk with over 100 years of combined industry and system knowledge.

**Steven Kay,  
managing director**



### Company Profile

**Offices:** As above

**Activities:** Business solution specialists providing ERP, advanced scheduling and security software along with business intelligence. A UK-based team skilled in offering a tailored solution for the manufacturing, service, distribution, retail and aerospace industries. Solutions include (but are not limited to) integration, cloud technology, hosting and Microsoft solutions (SharePoint, CRM, etc).

### Industrial Sectors

Our customers cover a wide range of industries including all manufacturing, automotive, electronics, distribution, retail, aerospace, service industries and accountancy practices.

### User Profile

Pinnula works with SMEs of all kinds; from single site to multi-site and multi-national companies. Companies looking to improve operational costs and efficiency through

business-centric software and services will benefit from Pinnula's solutions.

### User References

Penistone Reinforcements, Nordic Design, Worldwide Dispensers, Widney Manufacturing, EC Electronics, Unipart Rail, Dorman, East Midland Trains, London Midland Trains, Zaun.

### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Unix, Linux, Windows, Java, Cobol, XML, Web, Cloud Solutions, Smart Phone Technology

**Quality Standards:** IBM Business Partner, Microsoft Partner, EDI Standards (Ford, Caterpillar etc), Assist ISO 9000 accreditations

**Training & Support Facilities:** Full training is provided within the implementation stage and is tailored to each customer's requirements and can be provided on site, at Pinnula's office or remotely. After sales care is provided by a dedicated account manager and the UK-based support desk.

### Applications/Products

**ERP:** Uniplan is modular and can integrate with existing systems

**Planning/Scheduling:** UplanIT

**Business Intelligence:** DI Diver

**End Point Security:** ESET

**Supply chain management:** Uniplan

**Product lifecycle management:** Uniplan

**Manufacturing management:** Uniplan/UplanIT

**Engineering design:** Uniplan

**Production engineering:** Uniplan/UplanIT

**Shopfloor systems:** Uniplan/UplanIT

**Collaborative commerce:** Uniplan

**Hardware & IT infrastructure:** Dedicated engineers providing advice on hardware and infrastructure based on customer requirements and budget including: IBM, HP, Cisco, Draytek

**Implementation tools:** Full project and implementation management

**Service and support:** Continuous by the implementation team, support desk and dedicated account manager.

### case study

Since its formation in 1959, Penistone Reinforcements has moved from straightening wire rod for the precast concrete industry to making products as diverse as mesh panels, oven shelves, bespoke display stands, bundling and bailing wire. Barbara Lomas, financial director, explains that following a period of

rapid growth, the firm realised it needed an integrated software package to control and report on all aspects of the business, from process and stock levels, to accounts, providing current, accurate data that all departments could use to improve the operation and increase output. Business

intelligence tool, DI Diver was also installed to enhance delivery of strategic information.

"The knowledge and experience that Pinnula demonstrated in the manufacturing sector set them apart from the competition. We had very specific requirements, which Pinnula fully addressed," says Lomas.

**www.pinnula.co.uk**

# Planning Pressures?



## It pays to invest in the best!

Preactor Planning & Scheduling Software is the world's #1 independent solution.

Trusted for over 20 years by 3000 companies in 67 countries because of its unrivalled experience and proven ability to deliver.

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Preactor International is a world leader in production planning and scheduling software used by a wide range of businesses. Frequently integrated with ERP, MES and supply chain management solutions, Preactor is used by more than 3,500 small, medium and large multinational companies located in 67 countries. With a pedigree extending over two decades, it provides clients with cost-effective, interactive decision support tools that will help them to become more agile, especially in fast moving, make to order environments, where speed and accuracy of delivery are key competitive issues. Its unique combination of ease of use, flexibility and integration capability, combined with unmatched price/functionality, has enabled many users to obtain a return on investment measured in weeks, some in days.

**Mike Novels,  
managing director**



### Company Profile

**Employees:** 53

**Turnover:** £5.2 million

**Offices:** Head office, Chippenham, Wilts; other offices in North America, France and India

**Parent/Holding Co:** The CIMulation Centre (Holdings)

**Activities:** Preactor provides a comprehensive range of finite capacity scheduling (FCS) and advanced planning & scheduling (APS) software tools for manufacturing and service companies of all sizes and in all sectors.

#### Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:

Preactor has over 400 companies comprising 1,000-plus accredited professionals within a managed partner network. For further information see [www.preactor.com](http://www.preactor.com).

### Industrial Sectors

Preactor's inherent flexibility makes it applicable for all industrial sectors. For a comprehensive list of these including case studies in each, see [www.preactor.com](http://www.preactor.com).

### User Profile

Preactor is used from SMEs upwards to some of the largest global companies. Preactor is especially helpful for companies with make-to-order and lean/agile manufacturing business requirements.

### User References

Aerolia, Arcelor Mittal, Areva, DHL, Eurocopter, Goodyear, Imperial Tobacco, Lonza Biologics, Martell, Mead Westvaco, Muller, NKT, Pepsico International, Pfizer,

Pratt & Whitney, Sanitarium, Siemens, Technip, Tower Automotive, Twinings, Unilever, US Gear, Vallourec, William Grant.

### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Windows

**Quality Standards:** Microsoft Gold Partner

**Training & Support Facilities:** An extensive range of training courses is available and run on a regular basis – see [www.preactor.com](http://www.preactor.com).

### Applications/Products

**Manufacturing Management:** Preactor 200 FCS, Preactor 300 FCS, Preactor 400 APS, Preactor 500 APS

**Shopfloor systems:** Preactor Viewer

**Service and support:** Training, systems implementation and support.

## case study

Tex Industrial Plastics is a leading UK-based trade injection moulding company that delivers across a wide range of market sectors including water heating, washroom products, fire safety industrial, and automotive.

Key challenges include purchasing and keeping track of the correct raw materials, allocating orders to the company's 38 presses, managing numerous added value operations which are highly sequence dependent and all potential capacity constraints, while avoiding

peaks and troughs of labour demand.

Prior to Preactor, Tex sought to overcome these by a combination of its UNIX system and a manual magnetic planning board. The result was that it was impossible to keep on top of all its products, orders, raw materials and even the plan because the planner had to continually cross reference 3-4 data sources. The company invested in Preactor in 2004 because of its excellent constraint and capacity management, ease of integration to

the company's existing database, and provision of long and short term visibility.

After a successful go-live, the most immediate benefit was the dramatic increase in visibility and accuracy of information across the entire planning process. Generating the weekly plan now takes 2-3 hours as opposed to 2-3 days while overall stock levels have been reduced by 30-40% with planning department labour costs reduced by an even more impressive 50%.

**[www.preactor.com](http://www.preactor.com)**

# Leading from the front

## Bringing together low-cost planning and scheduling software

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- Supply chain planning
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- Lean and agile planning

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- Cost reduction



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Tel: 024 7632 3200  
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Countless companies still use spreadsheets to plan and manage their factories, and in the past that may have been the right choice. Now, however, Production Modelling's Orchestra software provides a viable alternative. Companies that have adopted Orchestra typically improve customer due-date performance, capacity utilisation and work-in-progress levels. And they are far more productive. Planners work with software that is a delight to use, some taking just 20 minutes to do what used to take all day. Better plans, with less hassle.

**Mike Straiton,  
sales director**



#### Company Profile

**Employees:** 20

**Turnover (UK):** £1 million

**Offices:** Coventry UK and distributors in Europe and USA

**Activities:** Production Modelling specialises in simulation, planning and scheduling. We provide consultancy services for specific projects and deliver software that is both customised and off the shelf, with training and support. We are often involved in projects aimed at business performance improvement. Typically, we help with lead time reduction, application of lean methodologies, supply chain planning, advanced planning and scheduling, work in progress reduction and cost reduction.

#### Industrial Sectors

Our simulation and scheduling software and services are used in many industries, including: telecoms, retail, automotive, aerospace, chemicals, defence, electronics, engineering, food/drink, logistics, pharmaceuticals, process and steel.

#### User Profile

Small, medium and large companies; manufacturers, materials handling suppliers, logistics companies, warehouse/distribution operations, as well as consultants.

#### User References

AstraZeneca, Automobile Association, BP, Pilkington, Siemens, Dupont, Corus, Pfizer, Pepsico, Philips, BAE Systems, Tarmac, BT,

Unisys, Jiffy Packaging, Syngenta, Johnson & Johnson, Nestle, Unipart Group, Walkers Snack Foods.

#### Services

**Industrial Standards:** Windows 98, 2000, NT, XP, Windows 7

**Quality Standards:** Microsoft Partner  
**Training & Support Facilities:** Regular courses in the application of simulation and scheduling techniques.

#### Applications/Products

ProModel simulation software and Orchestra are used in applications including supply chain, manufacturing, production planning and scheduling, production engineering and planning management.

#### case study

Bolton-based Vernagroup provides premier medical pulp products and macerators to healthcare markets around the world. Its advanced manufacturing processes are key to delivering cost-effective products. Orchestra has transformed production control and management – and the system was implemented in record time.

Steve Brownlee, IT director, explains: "Our production facilities are state-of-the-art, yet our planning systems were cumbersome and unwieldy, relying heavily on spreadsheets and

burning a lot of midnight oil. There had to be a better way of doing things." There was and the company chose Orchestra. Brownlee says the ease and speed of implementation was "staggering", adding: "The team from Production Modelling got to grips with our processes – from raw materials to finished product – within days... We have gone from signing off a purchase order to delivering a fully functional solution that delivers absolute benefits in only six weeks!" And the cost, he adds, was around a third of the nearest rival

solution. "What used to take a whole day for a planner can now be accomplished in 20 minutes. That doesn't just mean eliminating the hassle, it means we can afford to run alternative scenarios, knowing that built-in KPI alerts will keep us on track. The system also takes into account planned downtime for regular servicing."

Looking to the future, he adds: "We have an aggressive growth plan and our strategic planning with Orchestra shows us how well we will be able to accommodate that."

**www.simulation.co.uk**

## Why QAD On Demand?



- QAD's manufacturing focus
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- Industry-specific QAD Enterprise Applications editions
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- Leverage experienced industry resources
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- Systems infrastructure (servers, storage, networking)
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**Our Passion. Your Advantage.**

QAD has built a solid customer base of global Fortune 1000 and mid-market manufacturers who are excellent prospects for QAD's enterprise applications. With a proven track record of more than 25 years of industry leadership, QAD is ideally qualified to meet the business and technology requirements of global manufacturing companies worldwide.

We develop our products with constant and direct input from leading global manufacturers within the industries we serve. This industry focus is a key differentiator for QAD, enabling our customers to implement QAD applications rapidly, realise a rapid return on investment, and achieve a low total cost of ownership compared with other vendors targeting the industries we serve.

**Steve Gardner, VP sales  
& marketing, EMEA**



#### Company Profile

**Employees:** 1350 worldwide  
**Offices:** Offices in 26 countries globally  
**Parent/Holding Co:** QAD Inc, California, USA  
**Activities:** Founded in 1979, QAD has been recognised as a leading provider of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software applications for global manufacturing companies. Today, QAD enterprise applications leverage advances in internet and enabling technologies to provide critical functionality for managing manufacturing resources and operations within and beyond the enterprise.

**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:**  
Technology, solution and channel partners around the world.

#### Industrial Sectors

QAD enterprise applications are focused and optimised for select manufacturing industry segments: automotive, consumer products, electronics, food and beverage, industrial and life sciences.

#### User Profile

QAD Enterprise Applications is an integrated suite of software solutions designed to accommodate the needs of manufacturing companies around the world.

#### User References

**Automotive:** Eaton Corporation, Johnson Controls, TRW, GKN, SMR Auto Mirrors and Freudenberg NOK.  
**Consumer Products:** Colart, PZ Cussons, Lush Manufacturing, Amcor, Pregis, Filtration Group, Black & Decker and Avery Dennison.  
**Food & Beverage:** Grampian Country Food Group, Young's Seafood, Aunt Bessie's, Kraft Foods, Yoplait and AG Barr.  
**Electronics:** Itron Inc, Laird Technologies, AsteelFlash, Saft, Enersys, FEI & Talaris.  
**Industrial Equipment:** Coorstek, Speedline Technologies, Schlumberger, Watts Water, Saint Gobain and AO Smith.  
**Life Sciences:** Boots Contract Manufacturing, Laerdal, Beaphar, Katwijk Farma, Genzyme, Arizant and GlaxoSmithKline.

#### Services

**Quality Standards:** ISO 9000, Tick IT  
**Training & Support Facilities:** QAD offers service and support capabilities that are truly global in scope, with the capabilities and industry expertise to implement our solutions around the world and support them in multiple languages and currencies. Our geographic management structure ensures that our global practices meet local requirements and that our services are delivered effectively within each region. We support our customers through our network of regional support centres and online support, accessible 24/7 around the world.

#### Applications/Products

QAD Enterprise Applications address business-critical functions and processes at three levels: 1) Enterprise, traditional ERP, 2) Extended Enterprise, distributed order management capabilities for functions involving customers and suppliers, and 3) Community, a portal for visibility and access to information across the manufacturing community.

#### case study

Miniflex, a manufacturer of optical fibre systems, selected QAD Enterprise Applications On Demand to take the company from start-up to full production. Founded in 1994 and based in Suffolk, Miniflex operates in multiple locations, including two manufacturing sites. "We have three key goals – growth,

profitability and customer satisfaction," says Tom Carpenter, chief operating officer. "The next two to three years will be critical for us. It's vital that we focus our resources on our key goals... we decided early in the project that QAD On Demand was the correct ERP solution for us." The QAD SaaS solution will

provide Miniflex with a level of ERP functionality typically enjoyed by much larger companies, yet affordable and adaptable enough to support business expansion. "The solution gives great functionality, superior data analysis and business control, out-of-the-box – at a competitive price," he adds.

**www.qad.com**

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Paul Lockett, Managing Director of Esquire Glass

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Sage is a global company with 6.1 million customers, over 13,400 employees and more than 25 years of experience working with small and medium sized businesses. However, despite our global reach we have built our success on understanding and meeting the needs of customers in their local markets. Therefore the majority of our products and services are developed and supported locally. This ensures we provide a choice of high quality products and services which are relevant to our customers, use the most appropriate technology and are supported by local experts.

**Greg Ford,**  
**managing director,**  
**mid market division**



### Company Profile

**Employees:** 2,000-plus in UK, 13,400 globally  
**Turnover:** £1.4bn Sage Group  
**Offices:** Newcastle, Manchester, Glasgow, London, Reading  
**Parent/Holding Co:** Sage Group  
**Activities:** Supplier of business management software and services  
**Dealers/VARS/Systems Integrators:** Network of locally based business partners and developers.

### Industrial Sectors

Manufacturing, logistics, construction, wholesale and retail, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, chemicals.

### User Profile

Sage ERP solutions are suitable for companies in both the domestic and global market with more complex business requirements.

### Services

**Quality Standards:** Sage ERP 1000 – ISO 9000  
**Industrial Standards:** Sage ERP 1000 – SQL Server and windows server,  
 Sage ERP X3 – O/S, Database, Windows, UNIX – Aix, Linux – Red Hat, SQL, Oracle  
**Training & Support Facilities**  
 Training on Sage ERP solutions is provided by both Sage and accredited business partners, who have been trained by Sage. These partners work with the customer to provide customised end-user training. As a result, the specific nature of the training provided will depend on the individual needs of users, with training delivered typically on the customer's premises. Sage regularly monitors end user satisfaction with both its software and the service provided by its business partners, to ensure standards are maintained.

### Applications/Products

**Sage ERP 1000** is a powerful suite of business management software for larger organisations with more complex needs, Sage ERP 1000 transforms your business into a seamlessly coordinated unit.  
**Sage ERP X3** is a full-service enterprise management software system designed for mid-to-large businesses and aimed at meeting the most elaborate business processes, while remaining cost effective, quick to implement and simple to use. With a choice of languages, currencies, enterprises, locations and legislations, Sage ERP X3 offers an outstanding multi-company solution.

### case study

Specialist bathroom equipment firm ROMAqua used its parent company's Sage Line 500 system when it was first established, but as the business grew it needed a new solution: "We required a system which would match our business, supporting our focus on providing customers with a competitive, quality service based on our monitoring and understanding of their needs," says Frankie Powell, managing director.

With the help of Sage business partner Pinnacle, ROMAqua explored the possibilities offered by Sage 1000, with its strong CRM functionality. After evaluation, ROMAqua decided to opt for a 10-user system. The transition from Sage 500 to Sage 1000 was smooth and implementation was seamless. Since then, the company has benefited from a manageable, efficient system with the breadth and depth of functionality required for its customer-focused business.

"Sage 1000 has eased the challenge of operating in a tough market and has helped us to build an agile business in identifying and responding to changing market requirements, without the nightmare of having to keep writing bits of bespoke software," adds Powell.

"There's a great deal of essential information that we access day in and day out to run a successful business. Sage 1000 has been an excellent solution for us."

**www.sage.co.uk**