



Trinity Computer Services Ltd Customer Case Study



Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Oilfield Supply

Customer Profile

Craig International Supplies offers a range of products to the Offshore Industry

Business Situation

The company needed a solution that matched their 'Sell, Source, Ship' sales model and delivered timely, accurate business intelligence in both structured and ad hoc reports and queries

Solution

Microsoft Business Solutions - Great Plains was chosen as the solution for the business, in combination with Trinity's distribution software modules

Benefits

- Low cost of ownership
- Improved analysis and reporting procedures empower the team
- Improved invoicing procedures reduce costs and increase customer satisfaction
- 'Sell, Source, Ship' functionality streamlines the order process and improves efficiency in the Sales Office
- Improved productivity promotes business growth without headcount increase
- Elimination of paper based manual systems help to significantly reduce labour costs

Oilfield Supply Company achieves greater business efficiency and control with new IT system

"The system is an invaluable tool in helping us to exceed customer expectations and that has given us a competitive advantage that we are exploiting to the overall benefit of the business"

Jill MacDonald, General Manager, Craig International Supplies

Craig International Supplies, a division of Craig Group, Aberdeen, supplies a diverse range of products to the Offshore Industry. Established in 1998, the company serves markets around the World and has enjoyed substantial business growth with revenues now exceeding £20M.

With growth expected to continue a review of IT systems was undertaken to establish whether the business could benefit from implementing new ERP software based on up-to-date technology.

Inefficient business processes and inflexible reporting were quickly identified as the key issues that caused frustration and increased costs. Having carefully considered their options and studied the potential of a number of leading software packages, Great Plains from Trinity was chosen as the most suitable solution to help take the business forward.

The company now has a scalable, flexible and reliable business system that has delivered on its promise to significantly improve productivity and reduce costs. Furthermore, for the first time, day to day performance and business trends can be analyzed and reported upon with complete flexibility, allowing management to stay firmly in control.

With the R&D budget of Microsoft behind their critically important business software, CIS now know they have a system that will remain up to date allowing them to concentrate on providing a first class service to their customers.

TRINITY



Microsoft Business Solutions
ISV Software Solutions

“Trinity showed us that they really did understand our business model and what we wanted to achieve”

Andy Buchan, IT Manager, Craig Group

Situation

The Craig Group has over seventy year's heritage of servicing the needs of the Offshore Industry around the World. Its trading divisions offer a diverse range of products and services including: Offshore Standby, Underwater Survey, Foodservice, and Offshore Supplies.

The Offshore Supply division, Craig International Supplies (CIS), was established in 1998 and has become a significant operating division within the Craig Group structure with an annual turnover of £20m

The CIS product range is extremely diverse. It can literally be anything, from jelly babies or janitorial supplies through to heavy capital equipment – including £500K cranes! The company stocks only a small part of its overall product range – and relies on the expertise of the Sales Department to Sell, Source & Ship products as speedily as possible. Company success in achieving this is reflected by the '1st Point Assessment' accolade (a significant industry endorsement of service levels).

CIS faced a number of issues with their existing system. In particular the software was incapable of supporting the sales function effectively. Information on customer buying history and preferred suppliers for product was not instantly available. Nor were customer credit details or the background information needed to help develop relationships. A lack of systems integration meant there were inefficiencies throughout the business relating to duplicate data entry which seriously affected the administrative burdens placed on the CIS team.

Jill MacDonald, General Manager of CIS explains “The company had simply outgrown its old software system. With the CIS division growing rapidly, we were finding that the software could not cope.

We knew that in order to serve our existing customers well and to bring new customers on board we needed software that worked for us, not against us. Any new system would need to make it easier for us to provide the high service levels our customers expect”.

Solution

Immediate Impact

CIS evaluated a number of different business systems before eventually choosing Great Plains and Trinity. “We liked the look & feel straight away” says Dave Bissmire, IT Project Manager of CIS. “In fact, during the very first Trinity demonstration we were introduced to a number of exciting features such as Smartlists and seamless Excel integration. We could see how problems with extracting and analyzing data could be addressed”. Andy Buchan, Group IT Manager for Craig Group continues, “By answering the very specific business related questions we threw at them Trinity showed us that they really did understand our business model and what we wanted to achieve. We were confident that we were dealing with the right company”.

The 75 user solution comprises a distribution system with Financial Ledgers, Sales and Purchase Order Processing, Inventory Management and Business Analytics.

Flexibility

Any new system would need to give CIS's IT department flexibility and control. Andy Buchan says, “As we have a strong IT structure it was important for us to enable our own team to play a key role in the way the software is presented to the user. The adaptability and flexibility of Great Plains has allowed us to make important cosmetic changes to screen layouts, reports etc whilst still relying on Trinity for specialist implementation skills and support for matters outside of our own area of capability”.

“All invoices are now finished on the 2nd of each month. This is a week of time saved when compared with what we used to do. We invoice quicker, debtors pay us more quickly and cash flow is improved”

Jill MacDonald, General Manager, Craig International Supplies

Implementation

The system was successfully implemented on time and to budget.

“During implementation there was a heavy involvement from both Trinity and CIS” says Jill MacDonald. “Our teams worked very closely together, ensuring that we obtained a system that met our business needs. It was a lot of hard work for all concerned, but the good planning and communication with Trinity ensured that we stayed right on track in both the project plan and launch activity”.

Benefits

Low cost of ownership

CIS have been able to take full advantage of the Great Plains software architecture, which is designed to allow companies the option of performing simple updates themselves, rather than having to rely their IT supplier.

In fact, by using the standard enhancement and modification tools the system Administration Manger is able to perform most maintenance tasks associated with the system, in addition to some updating and development. Andy Buchan explains: “The software which we use to enhance the system, like Extender and Modifier, has been easy to pick up and learn. We have been able to use these tools to modify and fine tune our own system, as frequently as we like, in our own time to our own satisfaction. The cost savings are significant, when you consider that otherwise we would have had to pay Trinity to make these changes for us. But in addition, the real benefit to us is that we can remain in control of the day to day needs of our system, whilst Trinity is there to back us up with technical support and for times when we need to do major system updates”.

Improved reporting and analysis

Information access had been a significant problem for CIS in the past, with data held

disparate systems that could not be accessed centrally. With the Trinity solution in place such problems have been successfully overcome. Dave Allan, MD, is pleased with the benefits of this; “We need to be able to drill down into historical information very quickly, often when talking to a customer on the phone, so we can identify the right products, from the best supplier at a competitive price. With Great Plains I now have my finger on the pulse of the business in a way that was impossible before. I can analyze data in ways that make sense to me rather than having a set of limited reports that were difficult to change and never gave me exactly what I wanted”.

Using standard, ‘out of the box’ tools within the package software, the SQL database can be interrogated and analyzed without restriction. Integration between Great Plains and Office products like Excel and Word has enabled the business to use existing skills to make best use of the wealth of data available. “The reporting details and accuracy really do help me to maintain control” says Jill MacDonald, “in fact, there’s now nothing I don’t know about this business!”.

Quick, accurate invoicing saves week of time

Trinity’s Consolidated Invoicing software module allows CIS to consolidate many invoices into one, rather than produce an invoice for every order. The benefits for the Accounts Department have been significant: “All invoices are now finished on the 2nd of each month” says Jill MacDonald. “This is a week of time saved when compared with what we used to do. We invoice quicker, debtors pay us more quickly and cash flow is improved. We are very pleased with the effect that Great Plains and Consolidated Invoicing have had on our invoicing procedures”.

Microsoft Business Solutions

Microsoft Business Solutions offers a wide range of integrated end-to-end business applications and services designed to help small, mid-market and corporate businesses become more connected with customers, employees, partners and suppliers.

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Sell, Source, Ship sales efficiencies from integration, control and a lack of duplication

Significant gains in efficiency have been made by the sales department. Back-to-back orders are handled by one seamless transaction letting CIS automatically generate Purchase Orders for Sales Order lines.

“Sales order lines are linked to purchase orders without any re-keying” says Jill MacDonald, “We only need to input orders once. Furthermore the wealth of information at our fingertips means that we can quickly find the best supplier for the requested item”.

The sell-source-ship process now works more effectively than ever. “When we take a customer sales order we do not generally place the order against stock”, says Dave Allan, “rather, we raise a separate purchase order ourselves to source the product the customer requires. Previously we had to enter data twice into separate purchasing and sales systems. Now we do it once and are saving an enormous amount of time. We use that time to focus on added-value tasks like expediting customer orders, which has led to ever-increasing customer satisfaction levels”.

Improved Productivity

Improved efficiency throughout the business has allowed the rapid growth of the CIS division to be sustained without a corresponding increase in labour costs; “Our current business levels can be handled with a lot less people than we would have needed with the old system”

says Dave Allan. “Great Plains has helped us to grow profitably and still remain competitive in the marketplace”.

Elimination of paper based manual systems helps to significantly reduce labour costs

The flexible nature of the Great Plains SQL database and the ability for authorized users to create their own data tables means that data can be held centrally. “We store lots of information now in the system that we would previously have stored in paper sources” says Dave Allan. “This is giving us substantial savings in terms of printing and paper costs”.

For customer focused documentation, Craig’s use of technology also helps to improve customer service levels; “We now e-mail invoices, purchase orders and statements” says Andy Buchan. “This is speedy, efficient and it saves both time and money”.

An invaluable tool

Jill MacDonald summarises the benefits of the new system to CIS: “Now when we take on a new customer we make a point of explaining how our computer system helps us to help them. It’s a key selling point and crucially I now have the means to check that we are keeping our promises and delivering the right product at the right time. The system is an invaluable tool in helping us to exceed customer expectations and that has given us a competitive advantage that we are exploiting to the overall benefit of the business”.

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