

ICO Polymers Standardizes Worldwide on Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

Customer Success Story

Leading producer of compounded rotational molding powders improves efficiency and profitability with new ERP system

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUSINESS PROFILE

Largest producer of compounded rotational molding powders

BUSINESS/IT CHALLENGE

Implement one ERP system in all subsidiaries worldwide, so each country can better execute and deliver quality, value-added products to customers, effectively track sales and inventory data, and improve efficiency within the accounting department

SOLUTION

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

BENEFITS

- Faster collection of overdue payments, generating cash and saving the credit controller time
- Reduced month-end close from 5 days to 4 days
- Windows look and feel makes the software much easier to use

ICO Polymers is the largest producer of compounded rotational molding powders. They provide competitively priced engineering resins to the rotational molding industry, with custom powders for a variety of applications, including toys, kayaks, boats, playground equipment, and decorative garden products. It is a U.S. company with 21 locations around the world.

As its industry is highly competitive, ICO Polymers is constantly seeking better ways to execute and deliver quality, value-added products to customers.

Challenge

In 2002, as part of its continuous improvement program, ICO Polymers reviewed its IT infrastructure and core software packages. The company decided to move all servers to a central location in Houston, Texas, and to replace the different accounting packages, used by different subsidiaries, with one standard package that would fulfill the needs of both the head office and the subsidiaries.

The company knew that by standardizing its business practices company-wide, it would be able to leverage the market

knowledge, processing expertise, and business practices in all its locations.

Solution

The ICO Polymers head office in Houston looked at a number of software products, including JD Edwards, Sage, and Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains. They chose Microsoft Great Plains, partly because some of ICO's senior managers had used it successfully in the past.

Having chosen the solution, ICO Polymers wanted to move quickly to implement it in all the countries. It was very confident in the Financial Department's ability in the UK and New Zealand to implement successfully, so the company decided to start the rollout there.

The Partner

The UK subsidiary employs 95 people and has a turnover of £15 million. Lyndon Wilson, ICO Polymers UK finance director, knew that although they had all the business skills required, they did not have the IT skills or the knowledge of Great Plains functionality. He researched the market for a company that was technically competent, had an in-depth knowledge of Great Plains, could analyze the business

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Lyndon Wilson
UK Finance Director
ICO Polymers

requirements and tailor Great Plains accordingly, or make recommendations on business process changes that would increase efficiency and work to the strengths of Great Plains.

“I chose Tectura® because they were able to demonstrate that its people had the experience required to successfully implement these types of packages. Another crucial factor was that they actively offered suggestions, on how we could change our processes, to maximize efficiency,” comments Wilson.

The Implementation

Tectura’s role was to analyze the requirements of the UK business, write a functional requirements document that the users could relate to, configure Great Plains accordingly, migrate the data from the Sage system, train the users, and support them during the go-live period.

“One of the most complex aspects of the implementation was the migration of data from the old Sage accounting system into Great Plains,” says Andy Bush, Tectura lead consultant. “More than 126,000 items of data were migrated; it was sorted and then manipulated to the format required for import. It was absolutely crucial, for the continuous running of its business, that this data was migrated accurately.”

Benefits and Results

Great Plains went live in the UK subsidiary on August 1, 2002. Tectura was on-hand

to assist with user training and “hand-holding” until ICO Polymers was comfortable with the new system.

ICO Polymers UK has been using the software for sometime now and has reported these key benefits:

- Transactions can be posted to closed and future periods (this was not possible before)
- There are many more reporting options
- Because it is Windows based, the look and feel is familiar
- The platform is very stable and, unlike the old system, never falls over
- The month-end close has been reduced from five to four days
- The automatic alerts, when payments are overdue, means cash is collected more quickly and the credit controller saves time
- Because one software package is used all around the world, ICO Polymers’ finance directors are able to share hints and tips for optimizing its use
- The SQL database allows easy integration with other systems

ICO Polymers found Tectura’s approach to the project professional and flexible. Tectura used its Tectura Solution Framework methodology to manage the project. The methodology ensures a structured approach, with the client

involved at all stages. It enables the client to understand how the new system will function and, with Tectura's help, define business processes that support the new functionality.

Lyndon Wilson describes the relationship that emerged between the two companies: "I trusted Tectura to get on with the job. My team and I worked really closely with Tectura on all business decisions, and they dealt with our IT department in Houston directly. The move from our old Sage system to Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains was incredibly smooth; even the headache of moving thousands of transactions across did not prove to be a problem to Tectura."

The software is now being used in ICO Polymers subsidiaries around the world.

Lyndon Wilson comments: "Great Plains is a critical tool ICO UK will use and can trust to help improve the efficiency and profitability of the business."

Functionality Provided by Microsoft Great Plains Edition

- General Ledger
- Payables
- Cash Book
- Fixed Assets
- Sales Ledger



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