

So what's changed?

Rent-IT Systems is 10 years old and plans to celebrate the successes it has chalked up with a change of name – to 123insight Limited – at a time when so little else has altered, says Guy Amoroso

A decade ago, Rent-IT Systems was launched in the UK with a loud fanfare and equally weighty message to match: namely, that there's a better way than spending vast amounts of capital upfront to purchase your software solutions. You can rent it. Countless companies have taken up that clarion cry and are now customers.

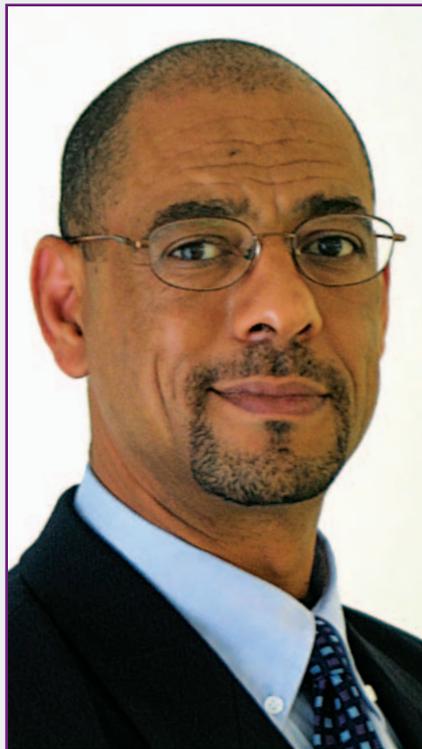
So what else has changed, apart from that? On the financial front, not a great deal, according to Rent-IT Systems' managing director Guy Amoroso. "We still have economic turmoil and recession – and let's not forget that, since the Y2k bug, the software industry has pretty much been in steady decline.

"Ten years ago, I recall reflecting on the system 'labels' ERP, MRPII, Lean, etc, and how, apart from the actual 'features set' these systems offered the manufacturer – and really I'm not knocking the progress being made – they all come with a heavy toll of value-added-services from an industry that is, quite frankly, addicted to service provision.

"And there have been a few additions in more recent times, such as KPIs, dashboards, workflow and so on. Not much change there then, particularly when you look at how these features are provided, not what is provided."

But perhaps, Amoroso muses, there has been significant change in a different direction, namely the emergence of new vendors – other than Rent-IT, that is – who also rent or sell business software for manufacturers that:

- Requires just six training days (one day extra for the CRM option)
- Involves no consultancy
- Needs no supplier installation or data conversion /migration services



- Uses the latest .NET technology
- Provides implementations that are typically measured in days
- Delivers the best independently recognised ROI (return on investment) in the business.

"I don't think so!" is his brief retort to his own questions.

Step inside Rent-IT, though, and there are any number of significant changes during that decade. The core application, its flagship solution 123mrp.NET, has been developed to support the widest possible spectrum of manufacturing, not only in terms of industry sectors, but also in manufacturing styles: encompassing everything from the complete one-off project or contract (shopfitters, for

example) to high volume, repetitive situations, where some of its customers (such as consumer plastics) are turning out 130 million products a year.

On top of that, this year saw the launch of the company's new CRM – its 'Communication Requirements Management' solution. Yes, it includes the conventional customer relationship management sales aspects, as you might expect, but a whole lot more, he says. "The big difference with our CRM is that its development was entirely driven by our customers, who were using the usual old suspects (Act, Goldmine, etc) – and then promptly told us what, in their view, manufacturers really needed!"

And what were the changes they were seeking? "They told us to focus on business processes and procedures where timely and effective communications, both externally and internally, make the real difference in efficiency terms," he states. "And, by the way, listening to customers is always a good idea!"

The 10 years since Rent-IT came into being have clearly been significant ones. "Our software has migrated from our more modest Access Tables database beginnings to SQL2008, being redeveloped using the latest Microsoft .NET technology. And looking at change in the wider market, it begs the question: 'Exactly how many so-called market leaders actually have a true .NET application?' A small handful, at best."

In its new incarnation, the 123 solution now offers integrated financials, KPIs, dashboards and, Amoroso adds, "the most comprehensive manufacturing capabilities, CRM and more in development, all delivered using our 123 unique Advanced Simplicity ethos. Ten

years have moved us far beyond the traditional definitions of MRP, MRPII and the like – not that I pay particular heed to such definitions anyway, I prefer to think of our application in very simple terms: software for manufacturers.”

With a strong and fully resourced development team, who knows what the next 10 years will bring, he says, “other than software that continues to give our customers the insight to weather all storms and the competitive edge over rivals”. Which leads him to discuss some real changes in Rent-IT’s business, per se.

“As I have already alluded to, we have, for quite some time now, outgrown the MRP ‘label’ in our product name. So, from the start of next year, both our software and business will be known as 123insight and 123insight Limited, respectively.” To Amoroso, this is nothing but a sensible alignment of the business with the reality of how it is perceived in the wider world. “We are already well known as the only

software provider to offer no-obligation training, meaning that you can’t get it wrong with 123.”

That is where the business is heading, now entering into its second decade. Meanwhile, back in today’s tough trading conditions – which are taking their toll on many according to Plimsoll Business Intelligence/Analysis, this is how the top 1,000 UK computer software companies are faring:

- 289 companies are in financial danger and will struggle to survive
- competitive pressure is now so intense that a third of companies are making a loss.

But surely Rent-IT itself isn’t immune to the same economic climate? “No, we aren’t immune, but we’re more than happy to report a better than 10% increase in business turnover (and making healthy profits) in 2009,” comments Amoroso.

“And, because of our financial strength, we are able to offer a number of recession-

beating initiatives – and to give a boost or helping hand – to qualifying businesses that genuinely would want to change or implement a system for the first time, but where money is an issue.”

How exactly? “Well, we can now help our new customers who qualify to get through these difficult times with a rental payment holiday for up to one year and the ability to spread the implementation costs as well. So, if you are a manufacturer paying a large annual support fee on a system that is outdated and overdue for replacement, but you think you’re stuck with it, think again! Now that’s real change, for a change, isn’t it?” ■

Rent-IT Systems

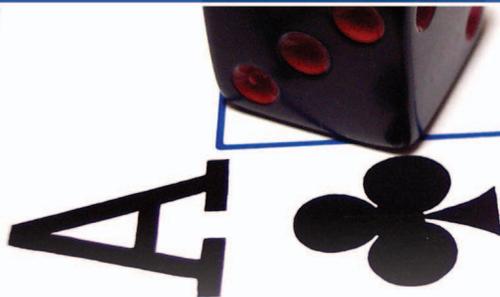
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The risk-free approach to business system selection



All the success - none of the risk.

Rent-IT set out to demystify the process of selecting a business system for manufacturers. First we developed the **multiple award-winning** 123mrp.NET and then we took all of the risk out of the evaluation process and subsequent use. 2½ hour free Evaluation Workshops run throughout the UK every month, make it clear whether 123mrp.NET could be for you. If it looks OK, the full 6 days of training in the system (all that’s required) is offered without obligation. So if you don’t have a comprehensive business system or are not happy with the one you have, join the many who had the insight, that have gone through the Rent-IT process and are now benefitting from using 123mrp.NET.

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