



Guy Amoroso

# FROM A TO B: 123INSIGHT AT 20

As manufacturing software developer 123 Insight marks its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, co-founder Guy Amoroso becomes chairman while Simon Badger takes on the MD reigns. MM meets the new boss

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**B**ack in 2000 Guy Amoroso and Craig Grant decided that the traditional approach to MRP system, from the perspective of both the customer and the vendor, was broken. Customers would pay a large up-front sum for software that they had no guarantee would meet their needs, would then pay maintenance and update costs, with any further customisations commanding high costs. Vendors would endure 'feast and famine', waiting for large value orders to drop and then having to invest massive resources to implement, maintain and support the system.

123 Insight (or Rent-IT Systems as it was originally known) was founded to disrupt the industry and provided Software as a Service (SaaS) before it was even a commonly-used term, with a user-installable product that would suit any manufacturing type or size. Fast forward 20 years and the company has seen significant growth, with customers in all industries covering SMEs up to multinationals with 4500+ staff.

Inbound MD Simon Badger is not new to either 123insight or the sector. Having worked in manufacturing for over 20 years, he became a user of 123insight back in 2003. "The company I worked for were facing exorbitant upgrade costs to our existing MRP system and so we looked at moving to 123insight," he recalls. "I had some reservations back then about moving to subscription, but this was quickly overcome after we completed training and understood the scope of the system. 123insight gave us a massive step up from our previous MRP at the time but had a fraction of what our system offers today."

123 Insight's business model removes all of the risk from the selection and implementation process. Prospective customers firstly attend a locally-hosted 'Evaluation Workshop' – a two-and-a-half-hour event that allows them to see the software and ask all of their key questions. If they like what they see and are ready to move forward they can attend the six days of 'No-Obligation' training on the understanding that if they decide not to move ahead they walk away with nothing to pay, but with a

lot more knowledge than when they started. They are then in a position to make a decision without committing anything financially at that stage. All pricing is transparent and published on the website, with the low monthly subscription fee covering software, support and updates.

Simon joined 123 Insight as the company's first customer care manager in 2011, visiting customers after go-live and beyond to help them get the most out of the software. He notes: "Unlike the traditional sales approach where an account manager is targeted to cross-sell and up-sell, the customer care team focus exclusively on bringing their industry experience to help customers identify where they can take further advantage of 123insight's features. Company growth happens naturally as a consequence of good service. We now have a team of four in Customer Care, headed up by Emma Richards, all of whom have a wealth of experience in manufacturing that customers can tap into."

In 2019 Guy took the decision to step back from day-to-day running of the company, with a year-long handover to Simon, providing a seamless transition. His new role as Chairman will allow him to focus on more long-term business strategies. Last year also saw 123 Insight launch a book, *How to implement a manufacturing system*, which provides readers with a template that works for any MRP system. Although available through Amazon, 123 Insight provide copies free-of-charge to attendees of its Evaluation Workshops.



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So, what notable changes has Simon found across UK manufacturing in the last 20 years, and where does he see things going? "The geographical scope has changed dramatically for UK businesses," he says. "At our inception most of our customers were serving a local or national customer base, whereas today international sales are the norm. The world is certainly smaller. Twenty years ago, we had the dotcom boom and bust, and back then most manufacturers had only a rudimentary online presence. Nowadays, their website might drive a large proportion of new business enquiries and many will want to link 123insight to an e-commerce site to manage global sales."

The financial landscape changed dramatically in 2008, with the crisis and subsequent recession, which Simon said focused the minds of many customers on their financials; "Having better visibility and the ability to identify trends is something that is much more important to companies today. Response is everything, so knowing quickly that you can make something competitively and within a given lead time can be the difference between closing or losing a deal."


Two decades ago, many small companies were only just getting to grips with email, but today connectivity is key, with Industry 4.0 an inescapable buzzword. Simon explains: "Although some have embraced Industry 4.0, many smaller companies struggle to see where it may benefit them and are lost as to where to

**123 Insight co-founder Guy Amoroso (top left) has become the company's chairman, while Simon Badger (below) becomes the new managing director**



even start linking things together. A good MRP system will allow the free flowing of information to and from other systems, quickly becoming the backbone of the company. We have customers that are displaying KPI information on monitors on the shop floor, linking machine monitoring to capture manufacturing data or linking weigh scales to quickly calculate quantities of small items."

Having now left the EU but in a period of limbo whilst the political wrangling on a trade deal continues, UK manufacturers continue to feel unsure about the future, however Simon feels confident for 123 Insight and its customers. "The reality is that Brexit does bring uncertainty, but throughout our history UK manufacturing has always risen to the challenge," he says. "The key is being able to react to change – to be able to quickly and clearly identify opportunities or threats and respond accordingly. We not only future-proofed 123 Insight as a company through the low monthly subscription, Evaluation Workshop and No-obligation Training, but we passed this security onto our customers.

"Whatever happens, they already have a system in place that can help them navigate these uncharted waters. If business goes up or down, they can increase or decrease their monthly licence count accordingly. Our transparent pricing policy means that there are no nasty surprises, and with a third of our subscription revenue ploughed into development they can be confident that the system will continue to evolve and stay ahead of the curve." 



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