

Gauging efficiency

Cygnus Instruments, based in Dorchester, Dorset, manufactures ultrasonic thickness gauges. The company installed an MRP system back in 2011, however, through a process mapping exercise it soon realised that it was hampering business growth.

Lulu Crosthwaite-Eyre, managing director says: "You needed so many different windows open to get through a process. It was very unintuitive. We realised that it was that inefficiency that was holding us back from being able to process and despatch more orders in any one given month. This was the main breaking point in the end – it was limiting our growth.

"There were also some major flaws in the system which caused staff to have to double-check and correct mistakes. We would despatch items but they wouldn't leave stock. Also many customisation tasks were left to us to implement which really strained internal resources. Essentially we had an unsupported system and were left to our own devices."

Operations manager Wayne Brown had a positive experience of 123insight production control software at a previous company so when it was time for Cygnus to install a new system, it was top of the list even after evaluating the alternatives.

The no obligation Evaluation Workshop approach favoured by 123insight worked well for Cygnus, with staff compiling a long list of questions in advance – all of which were addressed. Staff were allocated from each department for the project and no obligation training took place. Following this, the decision was made.

To allow for some serious data cleansing left over from the previous system, Cygnus allocated a 10 month implementation period before migration to 123insight could begin. An implementation day was scheduled onsite, where 123insight staff worked with a team formed within Cygnus to run through the various steps.

"Quite a few of the areas where we needed to restructure our data surfaced



Cygnus Instruments' managing director Lulu Crosthwaite-Eyre

during the implementation day and these were added as additional tasks. Everyone agreed the timeframes, and ownership was allocated task by task which then formed the backbone for the whole implementation project."

A key difference with 123insight is that Cygnus was no longer reliant on the provider or its own internal development resources. The company was able to take responsibility for the implementation, yet still had assistance available when required.

Cygnus anticipated that there might be resistance to change based on previous experience, so plans were put in place using the supplied 123insight electronic training documentation and with downstream training.

"Everyone had really got to know the system by then and had taken ownership of their new processes," Ms Crosthwaite-Eyre enthuses.

"We set a target go-live date across all departments of January 2019. We gave ourselves a week for the final switchover on the dynamic data, but all of the static data had been done for a few months already. The whole thing was incredibly smooth."

Immediately the company saw benefits. Despatch previously relied on two people, but this is now comfortably handled by one, with the other free to cover other areas. KPI (Key Performance Indicator) data that was previously non-existent is now immediately available and staff are now able to work easily across different disciplines, allowing a drastic change across the business.

Cygnus delivers on tight lead-times to customers by building to stock and 123insight's batch control and general ease of use has reduced errors and bottlenecks. The company also opted for 123insight's CRM+ module which Ms Crosthwaite-Eyre notes is already helping sales and marketing activities. Full traceability of parts and processes is a given – vital for



Cygnus which holds ISO 9001, ATEX and CSA certifications. Ms Crosthwaite-Eyre says that information in general is just much easier to find.

Support is an important factor for any MRP system and Cygnus falls well within 123insight's statistic of one call to the helpdesk per month. Normally, questions are answered immediately: "If it's something to do with the system they can show us so we keep that ownership and understanding of how it works, but if they have to get back to us they let us know and keep going until it's done. There's no comparison to the support of our previous system which really was non-existent," she states.

Cygnus had implemented Sage before going live with 123insight and selected Accounts Gateway to handle data exchange between the two. The result is significant improvements in both credit

control efficiency and cashflow.

Ms Crosthwaite-Eyre concludes that although there have been tangible and visible benefits, it's the overall morale change with staff that has made a significant impact on overall performance.

"Everyone is pushing to sell more and despatch more in any one month. It's not just about the people that we didn't need to recruit in this period of growth – it's also helped us to achieve that growth. I would say 123insight has easily paid for itself inside a year, but my gut feeling is maybe half of that.

"I reckon that we could grow by a third before we would need to take on another person in operations or admin because of how much we can process through 123insight."

■ **123 Insight**
www.123insight.com

■ **Cygnus Instruments**
www.cygnusinstruments.co.uk