



Keeping stock

Materials Resource Planning has enabled Patton Joinery to see a number of business benefits

Patton Joinery, based in Ballymena, Northern Ireland is part of the Patton Group, and makes a wide range of bespoke joinery products. Its production control previously consisted of a series of Excel spreadsheets and Access databases across several departments. This led to staff having to manually duplicate data, significant stock errors which could lead to shortages and delays and limited visibility across the business. Barry Johnston, work study administrator commented; "If we needed to do a breakdown costing for a large job we had to go to various different sources to get the information. Everybody had their own separate spreadsheets and databases. It just got too big; too messy. If someone wasn't available who had that information you had to wait until they got back to the office to get it. There was duplication all the time between the buyer, myself doing the costings and also on the estimating – we had the same information held separately and when we used to combine it all at the end we would get the wrong picture completely." At the end of 2007 the

company decided to investigate MRP solutions and looked at several, costing up to £42,000. It came across 123mrp.NET and was invited to attend an Evaluation Workshop in January 2008 by local distributor QM Systems at the Northern Regional College (NRC) in Ballymena.

Interestingly, during the evaluation of 123mrp.NET Patton Joinery provided one of its Excel spreadsheets to allow for a demonstration of how pricing calculations would work. Issues were identified with the Excel files that could be resolved, enhanced and automated by moving to 123mrp.NET, which demonstrated further to them the importance of migrating away from manually manipulated data.

Patton Joinery had numerous questions as to how 123mrp.NET could meet its needs; "We only make one off bespoke items and we were initially concerned whether the system was suitable for that as many systems

seemed to be geared up for mass production." After attending the first workshop and being impressed other staff were sent to two further workshops to gauge their impressions and the decision was made in February to select 123mrp.NET. "When you attend a workshop you can just see how the product works – you get the full picture."

Training was arranged in February on the understanding that if Patton Joinery chose not to register to receive the software that they could walk away without further commitment. Two staff attended the three day user training, with Barry himself attending the one day administration and one day implementation courses. Further in-house training was performed using the training documentation provided with 123mrp.NET.

Once training had been completed Patton Joinery set up regular meetings with key staff to structure and monitor the implementation process. It signed up for three licenses of the software, which has since been expanded to four, and started implementing in April. At the end of May they went live across its purchasing and costing department, with estimating and stores following shortly afterwards.

After go-live the most noticeable benefit was the reduction of paper, starting with the purchasing department; "With purchase orders we used to print every one, but that has been completely cut out now. We used to produce upwards of 600 per month but now they are simply put on our intranet and emailed." This has also filtered through to the company's ISO9001 and ISO14001 quality standards tracking, which is now completely electronic rather than paper-based.

Further benefits were noted once 123mrp.NET was rolled out through the stores department. Stockholding was reduced by 30%. The number of errors in stock was also halved, with Barry noting that duplication was the biggest cause of errors previously.

Reporting and overall business visibility has improved considerably; "Our old systems were not capable of the reporting that 123mrp.NET has, so it is difficult to have figures to compare to, but visibly we can see that the amount of paperwork and stock levels have improved. You can just see everything at a glance – nobody has to run down to stores and say 'how much of this do we have in stock'. Reporting has changed a lot. We would produce our monthly summaries spending a lot of time looking through sheets and sheets of data whereas now it's available with a few clicks of a mouse."

Local Distribution in Ireland/Northern Ireland QM Systems:



KEY FACTS:

- 30% reduction in amount of stock held
- 50% reduction in stock inaccuracies
- Eliminated need to print purchase orders

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