

Case Study

Thurlby Thander

Industry

Manufacturing - Electronic test and measurement instruments

Number of employees

90 +

Solution & services

- SYSPRO ERP
- Dynamics CRM
- Time and Attendance
- Advanced Quality Management

The challenge

- Unsupported business system
- Ageing system
- Costly upgrade with current supplier
- Lack of integration between different programs

The benefits

- Centralised business systems
- Speed and security of access
- Robust solution
- On-going support and development
- Future-proofed operations
- Reduced lead times
- Fully visibility of stock
- Substantially lower costs



SYSPRO ERP provides smooth continuity at Thurlby Thander

Companies undertaking a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system installation generally look for major efficiency improvements and cost savings with any system they purchase. In theory and in practice an ERP system will normally deliver on the expectation because of the enhanced control it brings to the company.

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Thurlby Thander Instruments (TTi) had a completely different goal. This tightly managed company ran with precision and efficiency. What it needed was a successor for its ageing systems that would integrate several functions served by individual programs, ensure continuity and remain current and supported for at least 20 years into the future. It found its preferred solution in SYSPRO ERP from business software company NexSys.

Business diversity

TTi is a major international manufacturer and distributor of electronic test and measurement equipment located in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Its products are available in more than 50 countries throughout the world. The company's offerings include power supplies, generators, analysers, meters, and electromagnetic compatibility test equipment. The company's own products are made to order and made to stock - it needs to be flexible and values the ability to meet tight lead times.

TTi also acts as UK distributor for other leading European, North American and Japanese manufacturers, supplying complementary products that enhance its own product portfolio and provide added value to its customers. TTi manufacturing and distribution work as an integrated unit, all using the same systems and people.

The company supplies products to major distributors such as RS and Farnell, specialist agents in Europe and several thousand end users. Wherever companies or educational establishments are designing, manufacturing and testing electronic devices you will find TTi devices in action.

“Because SYSPRO is a single solution we have substantially lower costs. We no longer have several licences, support contracts and so on. In a nutshell, we get more and better for less.”

Opportunity for change

TTi had been running on a DOS-based manufacturing system, with additional applications also supporting its business operations. This system had come to the end of its life and company realised that it was soon to be left unsupported. The supplier had said that an update was on the horizon but this would incur significant costs to TTi. In addition, TTi management were not convinced that the proposed time scales were practical.

With the retirement of TTi's Financial Director the company took the opportunity to review its existing business systems and recognised that the time was right for a radical change in its IT. This would allow the outgoing FD to provide historical insight and advice as to what was needed from the system. It would also mean that his replacement would be starting afresh with a brand new system. This was seen as an excellent opportunity for ensuring a smooth transition to the new technology and enable the system to be tailored to TTi's current and future requirements.

Following a thorough appraisal of three modern ERP solutions, TTi settled on SYSPRO. A suite of modules, including Manufacturing, Distribution, Financials, Sales, Engineering Change, and Time & Attendance were selected for phase one of the implementation. TTi also purchased CRM and Advanced Quality Management modules as future proof enhancements.

Pauley, Production Director, TTi said, *“We saw that SYSPRO fitted our needs perfectly. It would enable us to centralise our business systems into a single Windows-based enterprise system. Moreover, because it used SQL Server, it would provide speed and security of access, making it a much more robust solution than our old system. Importantly, we felt confident that the product had life, keeping it viable for many years, with NexSys known as a reputable company that would be around long term, offering us ongoing support and development.”*

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SYSPRO in action at TTI

It was also important that TTI chose a system that was not reliant on specific personnel to run it. The company has no designated IT department and so NexSys provides full system support. *“The system is installed on our hardware with NexSys having full remote access. This allows us to get on with our jobs without the worry of maintaining our IT. This is a great benefit to us.”*

As an experienced ERP user, Keith Pauley focuses on specifics. *“As a manufacturing solution, SYSPRO’s SQL-based database allows us to get at data we need easily and simply. This is very important as we have some specialised application that we use and the slickness with which the data flows between these and SYSPRO makes it easier for us to use the other programs.”*

“Also SYSPRO allows us to match verbal and emailed customer orders to manufacturing orders, expediting the manufacturing processes of kitting, issuing, testing and inspecting and sending the product back to stock prior to generating the sales order. One of our major customers post orders on its website. We collect these physically and input them into the system. However, NexSys is investigating a way to fully automate this process for us,” he adds.

TTI has a single 5,000 sq foot warehouse on site and to reduce lead times it had consignment

stock in warehouses in Europe. SYSPRO provides full visibility of stock across all these sites. The Distribution module also manages demonstration stock - and has a dedicated warehouse set up on the system.

“SYSPRO allows us to set up different warehouses that give us complete visibility of all stocks regardless of where they may be. The demonstration stock warehouse, for example, is a virtual warehouse that manages these items and allows us to sell them directly from stock.

We are also able to manage consignment stock physically lodged with our European partners but owned and controlled by TTI in Huntingdon. The system tells us precisely what they have and as soon as a unit is sold, we can transfer it from the consignment warehouse to the distributor. This has an added benefit for them of only being invoiced when an item is sold,” says Pauley.



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“SYSPRO is very controllable. It does precisely what we expect of it. We can see exactly where we are with the accounts, in particular who owes us money and who we owe money to. With it we have full visibility of critical financial information and we can produce any type of report we require.”

“Finance and Sales go together and the SYSPRO modules enable tighter control on chasing debtors. The system highlights who owes us what and when payments are overdue. This is important during the current economic climate.”

It is critical that TTI has accurate Bills of Materials for every item it manufactures. This is where SYSPRO's Engineering Change Management module comes into play.

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About NexSys

NexSys is a SYSPRO elite partner, with 40+ years' experience of delivering Innovative ERP+ solutions to manufacturers and distributors throughout the UK. NexSys technologies grant organisations of all sizes maximum visibility over business-critical information, enabling decisions to be made based on accurate, reliable, real-time insight. The company provides solutions that enable agility, innovation, and competitive edge. As part of the global K3 group, NexSys has specialists that have remained loyal to the business for more than a decade. It provides project management, software development, consultancy, support and training to customers to help them realise maximum ROI.