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Titan races ahead with methodical approach to ERP implementation

Specialist component manufacturer Titan is experiencing immediate business value after implementation of an advanced, tailored SYSPRO Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system was brought forward by K3 Syspro (K3).

Titan, which specialises in manufacturing bespoke components for the automotive, aerospace, marine and defence industries, recently invested in SYSPRO ERP to replace its existing Materials Resource Planning (MRP) software. The investment encompasses an Advanced Planning and Scheduling (APS) system and Equator HR solution, which are expected to help Titan drive growth in its key industries.

Titan has only just started its implementation of the integrated ERP solution and is not only on track for an on budget, on time go-live date but has even had some parts of the system implemented early, ahead of schedule. The company is already benefiting from a clearer view of financial and HR information after Equator was implemented six months early, to make it available to Titan at the start of the new financial year.

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"SYSPRO is very configurable and can be configured almost any way you want. K3 are happy to find a route for configuration that suits us, even if it is unconventional. K3 has built SYSPRO implementation around our existing business processes, which is ensuring minimum downtime and disruption."

At a glance

Company

Titan

Industry sector

Manufacturing & Design
- Components and complex assemblies for the Motorsport, Automotive, Defence, Aerospace and Marine industries

Number of employees

50+

The challenge

- Replace existing MRP Software
- Drive growth in key industries
- Bring together SYSPRO, Equator and APS

Solution & services

- SYSPRO ERP
- Advanced Planning & Scheduling
- Equator HR

The benefits

- On track for on budget, on time go live date
- Clearer view of financial and HR information after Equator was implemented 6 months early
- K3 built SYSPRO implementation around their existing business processes
- Simple, quick and effective implementation using 4D methodology
- Flexible approach to implementation means that existing business processes become the backbone of the programme, rather than the technology
- Site visits post implementation to help train staff to get the most out of SYSPRO

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Mark Martin, Financial Controller at Titan, explains the reasoning behind this decision and how an early Equator implementation was made possible. "*It was K3 who actually recommended that we implement Equator early so that we could start using it from the start of the new financial year and not have to adjust our way of working half way through the year, which would have caused delay and disruption.*"

"*We were able to spend time getting Equator ready for go-live thanks to the implementation approach that K3 adopts. We didn't have a consultant come in on a Tuesday and dictate to us that we were going to be working on invoicing that day. Instead, they worked with us on everything and if we needed more time on one aspect of implementation, they were happy to give us that time.*"

Maximising return on investment and mitigating risk are the two key factors to consider when undergoing ERP implementation. To combat the risk of disruption and downtime, K3 has developed its own unique 4D implementation methodology. This ensures implementation is completed in four key stages; defining the scope of the project, resource needs and timing for everyone involved, designing an effective plan with the customer's project team, delivering on an on-time, on-budget go-live with a final system walkthrough, and deploying the final preparations required for go-live. These steps are not always taken in this fixed order. For example, a number of delivery tasks are inevitably started at commencement of a project, such as setting up software and infrastructure.

This flexible approach to implementation means that a business' existing processes become the backbone of the entire programme, rather than using the technology as the foundation. This makes for a more process-orientated implementation which is easier for a customer's own project management team to get behind.

"The quality of consultants from K3 is excellent. They have a lot of knowledge about the product, are flexible in their approach and go above and beyond for us."

Mark Martin explains: "*SYSPRO is a very flexible system anyway – we knew that when we purchased it, and it had an influence on our overall decision. We are trying to bring together SYSPRO, Equator and APS, which is no easy task – APS can be very complex software itself, but the consultants at K3 have an excellent grasp of all three individual applications.*"

"*SYSPRO is very configurable and can be configured almost any way you want. K3 are happy to find a route for configuration that suits us, even if it is unconventional. Rather than change our business processes to build them around SYSPRO, K3 has built SYSPRO implementation around our existing business processes, which is ensuring minimum downtime and disruption. It also meant that we were able to go-live with Equator earlier than we anticipated. Because our implementation plan was built around the applications we purchased, and our existing processes, the data migration and system integration we required ran really smoothly.*"

Key to the 4D methodology that K3 adopts for every implementation is the definition stage. Titan has its own project management team within the business which works with a project manager at K3 and a team of consultants. Mark Martin leads the Titan project management team, and works with K3's project manager to understand the company's existing business processes and match them to SYSPRO before he briefs the other members of his team. By defining the scope of the project beforehand and defining the resource and timing needs of the implementation, everyone involved benefits from a no surprises approach.

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As part of this, K3 is working with Titan to keep business disruption and downtime to a minimum. They calculated a worst case scenario ahead of implementation and then identified further methods through which disruption can be minimised even further. This includes spending more time implementing certain modules, streamlining large similar processes for a faster go-live, and key for Titan, executing a disruption limitation plan.

Mark Martin explains: *"K3 told us up front about the data migration period, what to expect and how long this would take. They told us everything they were going to do to limit disruption and this enabled us to put steps in place outside of implementation to limit any expected disruption even further. Throughout the implementation process, if someone in our team is struggling with something, K3 put the extra time and effort in with them to help get it right. There is a concept and method behind everything they are doing, which is really making for a simple, quick and effective implementation."*

ERP implementation is a large scale project and just as the business application delivers long-term benefits to every function of a business, implementation affects an entire organisation. This is why it is important to take a phased approach.. As a result of this, the consultants from K3 implementing SYSPRO into Titan spend other days of the week delivering different solutions to different businesses all over the UK. The consultants involved from K3 are just as flexible as the system they provide and the methods they adopt, and can quickly adapt to a different implementation, with a different team, in a different environment.

Mark Martin explains: "The quality of consultants from K3 is excellent. They have a lot of knowledge about the product, are flexible in their approach and go above and beyond for us. What is really good is that these consultants are doing four or five implementation projects at a time in various different parts of the country but they treat us like we are their only customer. They come straight onto site and resolve any issues that may exist and respond to any situational changes on the day. They build implementation around us and how we work best. In fact, there's a running joke that I have to kick them out of the building at the end of every day because they are so focused that they forget to leave!"

Prior planning and the post implementation training process are just as important to achieving a successful on time, on budget go-live date as the approach to implementation itself. K3 ensured that Titan was fully prepared and knew what to expect right from the pre-sales period.

A number of product demonstrations were given to staff and everyone within Titan was made aware of what they were investing in, how it would add value to the business and what implementation would entail. K3 also has a number of steps in place for post-implementation, including site visits and usage monitoring to help train Titan staff on how to get the most out of their SYSPRO investment.

Titan is already 80% of the way through SYSPRO implementation and is already experiencing the benefits of its Equator HR solution. "Once you have decided as a business that you have made the right IT investment, it is then all about how your investment will add long-term value to your business. K3 gave us lots of demonstrations during the pre-sales period and made us really comfortable ahead of implementation. They are working with us to ensure that we are included in everything they do. On the ground they interact with us really well and their methodical approach has made for a really effective implementation," Mark Martin concludes.

"It's not until implementation that you are able to really see something as large as ERP in minute detail, understand how it will work for your business and how it will solve existing and future problems. K3 have really helped us to imagine the future of the business with SYSPRO and foresee some of the many benefits it will bring to our company. We're on track to meet our go-live date within our budget and really excited for the full system going live in a few months' time. I'd like to personally thank everyone from K3 involved in implementation; Jerris Sellman, Shon Hazrati, Jeff Gilbert, Allan Edwards, Jon Hyde, and Darren Edwards. They have all made implementation as pain-free as possible and are contributing to the future growth of Titan."