

SYSPRO 6.1 upgrade ignites Black Cat Fireworks sales order processing

Long-term K3 Business Technology Group (K3) customer, Black Cat Fireworks recently made a quantum leap forward with a major upgrade to its Enterprise Resource Planning system. For any company, the idea of changing from a system it has been using for years and moving to newer technology could potentially be a challenge. However, with K3 understanding the unique nature of Black Cat Fireworks business and its IT requirements, the implementation and roll out of the upgrade went smoothly and has delivered significant benefits.

Black Cat Fireworks has been using various versions of SYSPRO from K3 since 1991, so the company knows the capabilities of the system and has trusted its features and functions to provide the IT backbone for the firm's business. A key feature has been the additional bespoke programming requirements of the company for integrating other essential software such as a custom designed and developed load planning solution.



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At a glance

Company

Black Cat Fireworks

Industry sector

Manufacturing & Distribution
• Fireworks

SIC Code

46499 - Wholesale of household goods

Number of employees

30 +

The challenge

- Existing software out of date
- Need for easier integration
- Ability to customise reports
- Create executive views for real-time, instant information about customer orders and stock status
- Reduce administration time

Solution & services

- SYSPRO Financials
- Bill of Materials
- SYSPRO Report Writer
- Office Automation & Messaging
- E.Net Document Flow Manager
- E.Net System Manager

The benefits

- A flexible- future-proof solution
- Swifter sales order processing
- Improved report control
- Enhanced supply chain management
- Improved information visibility
- Fast access to data

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Each time there has been an update to the existing ERP software, there has also been a need for a lot of extra work to be done to ensure that all of the company's systems were integrating properly with the newer versions of SYSPRO. Having learnt of the integration and scalability capabilities of the SYSPRO 6.1, Matthew Broad, IT Administrator, told the Black Cat Fireworks management team that it was time to make the change.

"It was high time to make the change as our existing software was out of date. Clearly, we would benefit from accessing the new features within SYSPRO 6.1, such as easier integration and the ability to customize reports and create executive views for real-time, instant information about customer orders and stock status. The system would also allow us to add extra information directly onto delivery notes, which cuts administration time and the need for separate documentation," he said.

After two months of using the upgraded system, he reports that the company can do so much more with SYSPRO 6.1 and that he believes that it is a good investment as it has given the company a flexible and future proof system that speeds up sales order processing – a key requirement for the upgrade. "It was a natural choice to stick with SYSPRO and K3 rather than look elsewhere. The K3 team knows what we need to run our business. The improvements from using SYSPRO 6.1 are immense. Thanks to adding DataSwitch for integrating and manipulating data, we can process up to 12 large orders per minute," says Matthew Broad.



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"The seasonality of our business means we have to process masses of orders in a very short time window, but with the new system we can do this easily. The integration of SYSPRO with DataSwitch has been key to us achieving what would be impossible if everything had to be put into the system manually. This also allows us to import order data directly from affiliate websites straight into SYSPRO. We also have much more control of our reports thanks to SYSPRO Reporting functionality. I can make changes on the fly so that each individual in the company gets the information he or she needs," he adds.

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Customers place orders in various ways: smaller independent retailers by phone and larger customers such as Tesco using EDI. The EDI orders are handled by DataSwitch, which sends the information to SYSPRO. The orders are compiled by the system and sent to the load planning software and then the pick lists are generated. All orders are managed as pallet loads with the system producing the pallet tracking labels. On average, the integrated system handles around 100 orders a day of varying sizes for customers all over the UK.

Black Cat Fireworks suppliers have also benefited from the upgrade. The company now sends electronic files to suppliers containing the information they need using DataSwitch. This has been of particular benefit to the company's logistics partners who can simply import the order and delivery data into their transport planning systems to help with their scheduling. As can be expected from a modern fully integrated SYSPRO powered system, information visibility is improved, with fast access to data. "We have a live view of all important information – customer order status, accounting information, stock levels and so on. We can also simply reserve sales for customers as we have a good idea of their needs. The system reserves the products within the warehouse and alerts us to shortages so that we can take action," says Matthew Broad.

For companies dealing with seasonal demands that require fulfilling huge numbers of orders, Matthew Broad is convinced that SYSPRO provides an ideal solution. He says the ability to customise a standard off the shelf package without the need for major bespoke programming is a major benefit.



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"We are very pleased with SYSPRO and K3. The users are happy with the system having used it for so many years and although this upgrade is very new, they are familiar with the way it works. Where there is a need for managing seasonal demand, this system is fantastic. We also have the advantage of excellent support from K3, a company that has taken the time to learn about how we operate and understands our IT requirements," he adds.

Black Cat Fireworks is the recognised global No.1 firework brand. The company is part of LF Europe within the Li & Fung Group, the world's leading supply chain management company, headquartered in Hong Kong. Black Cat Fireworks creates exciting fireworks with the ability to outperform its competitors while adhering to legal compliance. The company's technical firework design teams work on a rolling programme of new firework product development and packaging design allowing new fireworks to be introduced annually.