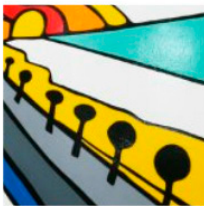


AJ Wells' expanding business demonstrates SYSPRO ERP excellence

K3 Syspro customer AJ Wells & Sons Ltd has seen rapid and major growth built on a comprehensive ERP implementation. The multi-division company has doubled its turnover in just three years and believes this huge growth is partly because the firm's management can focus on their businesses, knowing that they are fully supported by a SYSPRO ERP system.

As the leading UK manufacturer of vitreous enamelled signage and stoves, AJ Wells & Sons Ltd exemplifies a successful family-owned British business. Since its establishment in 1972, the company, based in Newport, Isle of Wight, has grown dramatically and continues to extend its horizons.

This is evidenced by an increase in turnover from £6 million to approaching £12 million in just three years. Underpinning the company's rapid expansion is a SYSPRO 6.0 ERP system. According to John Wells, Managing Director of AJ Wells, "After two years of using SYSPRO I wonder how we ever managed without it. We know that the system has more than paid for itself."



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John Wells, Managing Director, AJ Wells

At a glance

Company

AJ Wells

Industry sector

Manufacturing

- Vitreous enamelled signage and stoves

SIC Code

25990

- Manufacture of other fabricated metal products

Number of employees

140 +

The challenge

- Need to capitalise on growth opportunities
- Replace ageing system
- Pull together business processes and activities

Solution & services

- SYSPRO Financials
- SYSPRO Manufacturing
- Bill of Materials
- Office Automation and Messaging
- Customer Relationship Management
- Factory Documentation
- Requirements Planning
- System Administration
- Return Merchandise
- Screen Customisation Kit
- SYSPRO Reporting Services
- Work in Progress

The benefits

- Headcount is contained
- Increased profits
- Quick return on investment
- Accessible, up-to-date information
- Fully integrated solution

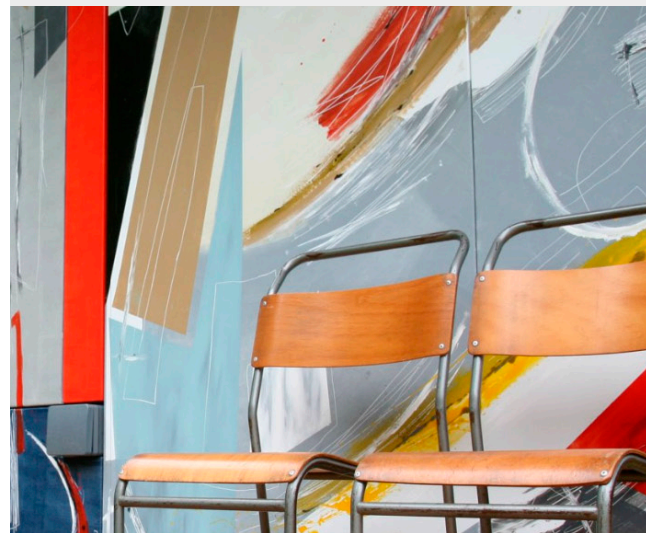
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AJ Wells has four divisions: Charnwood Stoves, Vitreous Enamel signage, Bodj Fair Trade Products and Anki Chimney Systems. The latter two businesses import and sell handmade tiles and home products from Cambodia and Icelandic pumice chimney stacks. The enamelling and stoves businesses are the largest of the four divisions. Charnwood sells stoves worldwide and has its own office in France, that also serves the Belgium market.

The Vitreous Enamelling division is the leading British specialist manufacturer of vitreous enamel signage and graphics, and sheet steel/cast iron and architectural panels. Customers include railway companies such as London Underground, Newcastle Central, and South Eastern. In addition, recent contract wins include supplying signage for Wembley and for the forthcoming Olympics when it comes to London in 2012. Enamelled signs are favoured for their robustness and longevity because they are highly resistant to environmental pollutants, graffiti and colour fading. This division is seeing huge year-on-year growth.

Charnwood Stoves lays claim to manufacturing the finest multi-fuel and wood burning stoves. These products are sold through independent stockists and builders merchants throughout the UK and abroad in France, Eire, Japan, Cyprus and South Africa. This business is escalating rapidly with the interest in wood as a renewable fuel source, particularly as the company's products are extremely fuel efficient.

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Recognising the need for ERP

Notwithstanding the demand for AJ Wells' products, the company realised that to capitalise on growth opportunities it had to find a replacement for its ageing Pegasus Opera system. This simply could not support the company's expansion objectives. Pulling together all its business processes and activities was beyond its capabilities.

The management team did try and work around the issues by using the legacy system, but they soon realised that this was not the best solution for the way ahead.

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Recognising the fact they required an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, John Wells and his management team set out to investigate the market. The company worked out their main requirements for the system and then invited five companies to present their solutions. Although some of the ERP systems they evaluated could do some of the tasks, only one – SYSPRO ERP – had the features and functions to solve all of their issues.

“K3 drove us to taking on SYSPRO,” says John Wells. “Let me explain. Although the alternative systems looked like they could work for us, we felt that SYSPRO could do it better. The presentation, their ability to listen and answer questions and openness was refreshing. One of the key questions for us was and still is ‘Can I tell my customers when they can expect their goods even when I don’t have them in stock?’. The system’s “Available to Promise” feature was therefore one of a number of a key deciders for us in choosing K3 and SYSPRO.”

No looking back

Since implementing the solution in July 2005, John Wells has become a strong supporter of SYSPRO ERP. He says system start-up was “underwhelming” as the change over from the legacy system was extremely easy. K3 helped with the preparation guiding AJ Wells through the process and enabling a smooth start up of SYSPRO “We simply switched off Pegasus and began working with the new system,” says John Wells.

“SYSPRO has enabled us to do more with the same number of people and without it we probably would have needed more staff. Because the system has supported our expansion we have benefited from greater profits. It has therefore proven itself as an essential part of our investment in the company,” he says.

The company is able to benefit from access to virtually any information it needs to tap into at any given time, using the Manufacturing, Accounting and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) modules. John Wells likens using SYSPRO ERP as a journey and the company has yet to exhaust the system’s capabilities. “Two years on we are still learning what it can do for us. We are learning to push it further,” he comments.

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Managing the full cycle with integrated ERP

SYSPRO ERP is crucial to the AJ Wells’ Charnwood stoves manufacturing process. The system manages the full cycle of manufacturing. Company personnel enter a planned forecast into the system and this is translated into Works Orders. This calls up all the parts needed and links to Purchase Orders for suppliers. SYSPRO ERP then pulls it altogether and puts all the parts into stock. Following manufacturing, finished products are warehoused using the system and the Sales Departments in the UK and France are to see instantly available stock.



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This tight integration between departments is extremely important, particularly with overseas offices linking into the UK HQ. Moreover, keeping a tight rein on the accounts department is easy as the system is finely tuned to generate and manage all accounting functions. "Each and every stage of our production and administration is reflected within the system," says John Wells.

The fully integrated nature of SYSPRO ERP modules is an important feature of the system. John Wells points to the seamless link between Manufacturing and CRM. Another benefit is the ability to use Warehousing to create a virtual warehouse to ring fence a percentage of common parts. This ensures that there are always enough spares as well as parts for production. The spare parts department has a clear view of what is available for sale and the remaining production parts remain on call for manufacturing.

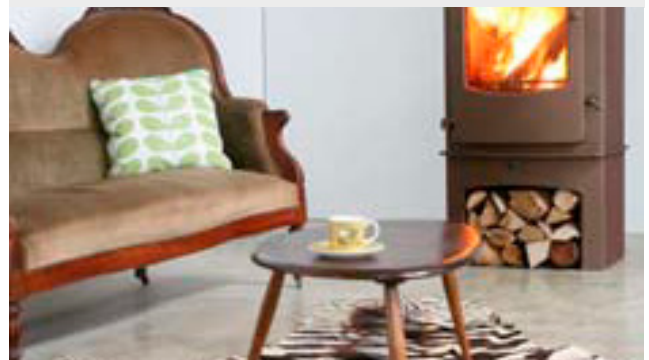
Always looking ahead

The vitreous enamelling business is specialised and produces a huge range of products. Most of these products are one-offs. To tighten up the production even further AJ Wells is investigating Product Configurator. This module is ideal for the Configure and Make to Order basis of the Vitreous Enamelling division. The module manages a broad range of configuration information for advancing production and boosting efficiencies. This includes selection criteria definitions for configuration options, commonly used configurations, labour requirements, critical component requirements and provides extensive reporting.

"Product Configurator will make a massive difference to us and is one part of the new horizon SYSPRO ERP is opening up for us," says John Wells.

John Wells says that the company is also looking at integrating barcoding for greater control and inventory accuracy. He sees this system extension happening in the next 12 months.

"The team provides brilliant support. What they say they will do, they do...you have to remember that getting the right system in place is only 50% of the battle. The other 50% is excellent support."



Delivering on promises

With regard to K3 Business Technology Group's support John Wells is extremely pleased. "The team provides brilliant support. What they say they will do, they do. They meet all expectations. You have to remember that getting the right system in place is only 50% of the battle. The other 50% is excellent support. I am sold on SYSPRO and more than satisfied with the support," concludes John Wells.

A.J WELLS & SONS LTD

