



Epicor helps Communisis to control diverse operations



Success Highlights

Challenges and Opportunities

- Acquisition strategy resulted in disparate Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and MIS systems.

Epicor Solution and Services

- Epicor Manufacturing

Why Epicor?

- Epicor Manufacturing was selected because it fits the Communisis criteria of providing extreme scalability at optimal cost

Benefits

- Epicor provides a broad toolset for planning and managing all resources within and across location and company boundaries
- Epicor software is built on the open Microsoft .NET platform which provides Communisis with the flexibility it requires for its operations
- Communisis is using the full manufacturing suite to get the maximum benefits from this tightly integrated software to identify and plan the resources needed to capture, produce, ship and account for customer orders

Company Facts

- Location: Leeds, UK
- Industry: Communication Solutions
- Number of Locations: 15
- Web site: www.communisis.com

Communicate more profitably with
COMMUNISIS

“The quality of how we run the business has been improved and we have greater levels of control throughout the business. In a testing environment the Epicor software is working well.”

Paul Beresford, Business Systems Director

Communisis plc provides marketing business process solutions to some of the biggest brands in Europe, is the UK's market leader in direct mail production, has the biggest transactional document site in Europe (producing 1.5 million documents a day) and is the fastest growing digital solutions provider in Europe. Amongst its thousands of customers, Communisis includes Barclays, Centrica, The Co-operative Group and The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to name but a few.

This dominant position has been achieved by continually developing new ways of sourcing and managing print and communications. In this quest to help its customers communicate more profitably with their customers, Communisis has sought out the best-of-breed solution and frequently acquired it.

Business Challenges

This aggressive acquisition strategy resulted in a powerful offering combining a unique print management solution along with transactional print and world-class direct marketing production facilities but, unfortunately and perhaps inevitably, disparate enterprise resource planning (ERP) and MIS systems.

About Epicor

Epicor is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, hospitality and services industries. Founded in 1984, Epicor serves 20,000 customers in more than 150 countries, providing solutions in over 30 languages.



Communisis offers a whole portfolio of related services: print and document management, statement and billing outsourcing, direct mail services, cheques, security print, marketing process consultancy, and e-print sourcing solutions. The organisation employs around 1500 people across the UK and Europe in over 15 sites, some of which are within customer premises. Normality for Communisis is processing around 800 orders a day from quote to cash.

To maintain its competitive edge, Communisis decided that it needed strong control and governance across all of its activities and to that end is implementing an ERP system which will encompass all of the business functions.

Solution Overview

Epicor Manufacturing was selected because it fits the Communisis criteria of providing extreme scalability at optimal cost. According to Paul Beresford, Business Systems Director at Communisis, "Epicor also provides a broad toolset for planning and managing all resources within and across location and company boundaries which is ideally suited to the Communisis landscape."

Epicor's software is built on the open Microsoft .NET platform, providing Communisis with the flexibility it requires for its operations. Although Epicor software is modular, Communisis is using the full manufacturing suite to get the maximum benefits from this tightly integrated software to identify and plan the resources needed to capture, produce, ship and account for customer orders.

Communisis implemented Epicor on Windows servers in one of its business units in nine months and is now benefitting from the experience it gained during this roll-out to deploy the software throughout the enterprise.

The Challenges

Beresford warns, "The reality is that ERP is not easy. It is vital to be aware from the outset that it is a challenging exercise which demands a huge level of commitment and investment from the entire organisation."

Communisis used the opportunity of implementing ERP to take an in-depth examination of its business which Beresford says has given the organisation the opportunity to review its inherent business practices and upgrade them. It has also invested in its staff as it felt that to ensure the success of the implementation Communisis needed in-house expertise in Epicor software. Given their

understanding of the business drivers, these people can then align the software structure with the company's goals. The Communisis Epicor seven-strong team comprises database administrators, trainers, business consultants as well as the director and improvement director.

Key to the Epicor solution is the distributed, common database which provides users access to the right information from the right source at the right time. As Beresford points out though, this data must be maintained, "We had to educate our users to demonstrate that spending additional time inputting data where they never had to before would save time in the long-term and would have further benefits to the organisation."

In 'parts management' users have had to make a huge effort in inputting a range of different data. This proved an onerous task but the benefits have been seen in the MRP cycle as information such as supplier, cost, and delivery times are immediately on hand and the system can even make a part order suggestion. Beresford explains that it is all about managing expectations and also demonstrating efficiency gains: "The benefits of a full set of data are well worth the time needed to compile it."

Alongside this, a key challenge for Communisis was keeping its diverse business functioning effectively whilst implementing this massive change. This was achieved because the organisation had acknowledged the importance of this rationalisation and investment had been made in the significant internal resource to ensure a smooth adoption of the new software and business practices.

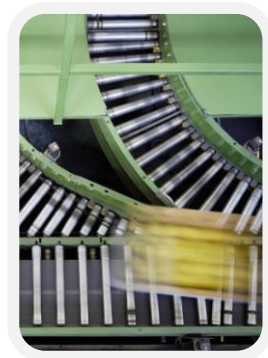
The Benefits

Whilst the development team move on to deploy the Epicor software to other business units within the Communisis group the improvement director will continue to work with the unit that already has the software to manage further understanding of the software and deliver operational changes.

The development team has also undertaken to deliver a training program to the business users of Epicor to ensure that they understand the product and understand the changes that it has wrought within the business. The program also teaches users that the business will continue to change to ensure that Communisis continues to pursue excellence in the delivery of its services.

SUCCESS STORY - Communisis

The Communisis team is so pleased with the success it has seen in deploying the Epicor software that it has decided to roll it out to the entire organisation – originally the software was destined to be deployed in just two business units.



EPICOR®

Worldwide Headquarters

18200 Von Karman Avenue,
Ste. 1000
Irvine, California 92612 USA
Toll Free: +1.800.999.1809
Phone: +1.949.585.4000
www.epicor.com

Latin America and Caribbean

Bld. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882
Int. 104
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, CP 64650
Mexico
Phone: +52.81.1551.7100
Fax: +52.81.1551.7117

Europe, Middle East and Africa

No. 1 The Arena
Downshire Way
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1PU
United Kingdom
Phone: +44.0.1344.468.468
Fax: +44.0.1344.468.010

Asia

238A Thomson Road #23-06
Novena Square Tower A
Singapore 307684
Singapore
Phone: +65.6333.8121
Fax: +65.6333.8131

Australia and New Zealand

Level 34
101 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Australia
Phone: +61.2.9927.6200
Fax: +61.2.9956.8976