



Brintons Carpets Limited

Company Facts

- Location: Kidderminster, Worcestershire, United Kingdom
- Industry: Carpet Manufacturing
- Web site: www.brintons.net/

“The entire company is covered by what appears to be a single software package. Tropos is precisely tailored to the needs of particular departmental users.”

Bryan Cowley, IT Manager | Brintons Carpets Limited

Brintons Carpets employs 2000 people across three sites in Kidderminster and one each in Telford and Portugal. It is using the Epicor Tropos ERP (enterprise resource planning) system to streamline and support the production of both a large number of standard products and a constantly changing stream of ‘one-off’ jobs. The company’s operations cover all aspects of production from raw wool processing to distribution of the finished carpet including wool blending, carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving. In addition, Brintons Carpets builds all its own carpet weaving looms utilising the resources of a considerable engineering facility.

According to IT Manager Bryan Cowley, Brintons Carpets began working with the Tropos system during 1995 in response to a need to upgrade its IT support for business operations in the face of changing market conditions. Tropos was chosen to replace a centralised, mainframe system running bespoke software that was difficult to maintain and had deficiencies in functionality, including limited manufacturing planning facilities and insufficient integration with accounting functions. As a result it was impossible to obtain information on the financial performance of the business direct from the system.

In contrast the company is now running an integrated Tropos system across all its sites, in which some 400 PCs (personal computers) running in the Windows operating environment act as clients to half a dozen servers which are in turn linked to a central UNIX hardware platform. In addition about 100 character cell terminals are connected to the system. The Tropos modules involved are those for: Control; Resources Products and Processes; Warehousing and Inventory; Purchasing; Sales & Distribution; Scheduling; Process & Materials Planning; Production Monitoring; and Finance. In addition several third party packages are integrated with the Tropos system including the Coda IAS accounting system, the Genetik scheduling package and the Logol forecasting package.

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Expanding business
- Existing software lacked functionality

Solution

- Epicor Tropos ERP

Benefits

- Savings of £1m per annum on IT expenditure

Brian Cowley says the company had both immediate and longer term objectives in making the changeover. In the immediate term it had to respond to increasing market pressure for customised products to satisfy the increasing demand from the contract market in addition to the extensive range of standard products.

Further ahead the company also anticipates that its operations will become more globalised and that it will need further secure communications links for business and manufacturing information across wide area networks. The underlying principles of the exercise, says Bryan Cowley, were that the company should configure its IT systems in a way that supported both best practice and responsiveness to change.

But the company was also aware that an IT system composed solely of standard software modules would not provide it with sufficient functionality. The carpet manufacturing business imposes various requirements that demand their own specific solutions. As such a system that could provide the company with effective control and visibility of its business and manufacturing processes needed to combine not just modularity and ease of integration, but also be able to accommodate a high degree of customisation.

The key to achieving this objective has been Epicor Software Developers Kit (SDK). SDK provides a series of standard interfaces to Tropos and the ability to generate customised Tropos transactions. SDK has enabled Brintons Carpets to modify its ERP system by building a core of native Tropos modules supplemented by a range of custom-written transactions and interfaces to third-party packages.

Underlying SDK is the Tropos Network Interface (TNI). This provides the component-based architecture of Tropos, and it is SDK's ability to reuse and manipulate existing components that provides the flexibility and adaptability inherent in Tropos. A component based architecture such as TNI, allows for high levels of customisation and modification without compromise to the standard package integrity.

Bryan Cowley explains that carpet manufacturing imposes some highly exacting requirements. Ensuring consistency of colour, for instance, requires that all the yarn of a particular shade used to meet a specific order must come from the same dye batch. Other standard practices unique to carpet production include feeding back

waste yarn into the manufacturing process, and selecting the most appropriate stock item when cutting length of standard carpet. These practices cannot be easily handled in a conventional MRP system.

To cope with these and other demands, Brintons Carpets has configured around 80 new components. One component, for example, allows the company to take account of fluctuations in the weight of batches of raw wool caused by variations in moisture content. Another provides a single screen input for new product detail that automatically generates the multiple Tropos transactions for item creation, inventory parameters, formulae, processes and costing.

Other capabilities customised using SDK include:

- Sales order entry
- Interface between Tropos forecasting module and Logol
- Order progress tracking
- Telephone stock enquiry and reservation
- Wool and yarn blending—to allow different attributes to finished product
- Management and control of stock between manufacturing sites
- Management of the 'cut and wrap' process through to despatch
- Optimisation of carpet slitting
- Support for new product introduction
- Integration with a finite sequencing package to optimise loom and dye vat sequencing

The Tropos implementation has provided tangible benefits to the whole company. A reduction in IT resource requirements of 75% plus a general streamlining of maintenance and support procedures will save the company as much as £1million a year, in IT expenditure alone.

Other than a cost saving, Tropos and the integrated software packages have brought increased agility and competitiveness through enhanced control and visibility of Brintons Carpets processes. "In effect", says Bryan Cowley, "the entire company is covered by what appears to be a single software package, but one whose functionality is precisely tailored to the needs of both particular departmental users and the company as a whole".

"We have combined all the benefits of integrated standard software functionality with the flexibility of customised user interfaces."

Bryan Cowley, IT Manager

Moreover a foundation has been laid for further expansion and development. Any increase in the number of the sites from which the company operates will be easier to accommodate, irrespective of their location. The same is true for possible future enhancements to system functionality, such as the incorporation of EDI links to customers and suppliers or integration with office automation systems.

Achievements at implementation were considerable. Bryan Cowley sums them up like this: “We have completed a move from a mainframe system to a client/server environment, in which we have combined all the benefits of integrated standard software functionality with the flexibility of customised user interfaces and, where necessary, front-end programs.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industries. With more than 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit www.epicor.com.



Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

+1.888.544.6315 info@epicor.com www.epicor.com

Corporate Office
804 Las Cimas Parkway
Austin, TX 78746
USA
Toll Free: +1.888.448.2636
Direct: +1.512.328.2300
Fax: +1.512.278.5590

Latin America and Caribbean
Blvd. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882 Int. 104
Plaza Central, Col. Santa Maria
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: +44.1344.468468
Fax: +44.1344.468010

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
Suite 2 Level 8,
100 Pacific Highway
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia
Phone: +61.2.9927.6200
Fax: +61.2.9927.6298