



Epicor Success Story

Bruichladdich Success Story

Islay Whisky Distillery Blends Heritage With Technology to Deliver the Perfect Dram

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Islay, Inner Hebrides, UK
- ▶ Industry: Whisky manufacturer
- ▶ Website: www.bruichladdich.com



Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Transition into a modern manufacturer was difficult with legacy processes and equipment
- ▶ Reporting excise and duty information and tracking orders through manual operations proved ineffective
- ▶ Outdated systems caused problems managing the bottling process

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Tropos™

Benefits

- ▶ Improved data accuracy through technologically advanced business practices
- ▶ Increased employee efficiency through concise and timely reporting
- ▶ Enabled in-house bottling processes

Founded on the remote Isle of Islay in the Inner Hebrides in 1881—where it is still headquartered today—Bruichladdich is a globally renowned whisky distillery that mainly produces single-malt craft Scotch whisky. During its long history, the distillery has had a number of owners, but prior to its most recent purchase in 2001 by Simon Coughlin and Mark Reynier, it was considered “surplus to requirements” and had been closed since 1994. Simon and Mark were keen to embrace this challenge and embarked on a transformative journey to not only build on Bruichladdich’s heritage in the whisky sector, but also recreate it into the progressive Hebridean distillers they are today.

Armed with a passion to innovate what they felt had become an increasingly conformist industry, the owners were especially keen to distil whisky that gave a nod to its Islay heritage and was created with authenticity, but was still a contemporary whisky brand. The owners wanted to move beyond the industrialisation and self-interest that other organisations were exhibiting and focus on quality, people, and provenance.

All of this was achieved by restoring the original Victorian machinery and ensuring that the barley remained 100% Scottish. This is how the owners saw the opportunity to progress within the whisky industry, and it remains the pillar of the company’s philosophy as they continue to look to the future.

The challenge

Reinvigorating the business back in 2001 was challenging for Buichladdich. It was breaking into an industry that had become dominated by a few key players. Despite this, Buichladdich felt that the market was shifting in terms of what consumers wanted and saw a gap when it came to offering an authentic and craft whisky—one where the artisans are involved in every aspect of the production process. The brand boasted the legacy of a whisky distillery and the rejuvenated energy of a company seeking to challenge the market, but it was lacking the technological infrastructure to expand the business.

A significant sticking point when starting out was regulatory compliance. As is standard protocol with any company producing goods with duty, many additional stringent regulations came from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). It was vital that Buichladdich could show that it could control and track every single litre of alcohol at any one moment throughout the production process—from maturation, to bottling, to dispatching. However, back in 2001—armed with only a basic stock control system and reams of spreadsheets—the relentless task of compiling forms and detailing every alcohol order became extremely laborious for the small team. Considering that reports had to be filed daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, something that should have been an easy task ended up becoming a mammoth reconciling operation that often led to the team working nights and weekends to meet deadlines. With timings slipping further and further as the months went on, Buichladdich began looking for a more effective way to work.

As part of the brand's ambition to do everything in house, Buichladdich needed to move the bottling process from a third-party warehouse in Glasgow to their headquarters on Islay. However, the company's legacy stock control system—inherited from the previous owners—just wasn't fit to handle this additional process, as it didn't have the capability to incorporate bottling as a process into the system. Hence, it was essential that a new system had an integrated bottling module.

Taking the next steps

In order to meet the company's plans for growth, the business needed to look for a solution that would not only incorporate bottling, but also help move financial reporting from single-entry spreadsheets to an automated and reliable system. A big part of the change was prompted by the need to streamline processes. Buichladdich knew that this needed a significant investment in industry-specific manufacturing software—an investment that

seemed out of reach at the time, because the company didn't feel large enough to warrant such an advanced technological solution. However, it was an investment that could support the business to look forward and grow in line with ambitions. Management had become used to throwing more and more people at the old system, but it was time to look at offsetting the escalating labour cost with the cost of investment in a new system.

After searching for a suitable system Buichladdich selected Epicor Tropos. The solution was particularly suited to Buichladdich, as it was advanced enough to incorporate bulk stock control and bottling functions, so it became the stand-out choice to deliver for the business' needs. This choice was further reinforced after attending a user group and hearing about the experiences from other distilleries using Tropos. It became evident that the system would alleviate the current challenges facing Buichladdich, and it was advanced enough to meet the future plans for the brand's transformation and growth.

Adjusting to a new way of working

Whilst Buichladdich realised that it didn't necessarily need all the features incorporated into Tropos immediately, ambitious plans for future growth meant these features would imminently become very useful. Fundamentally, it was important that the investment was made early in the business' growth to best prepare its technology and manufacturing processes for its long-term goals.

"We were always looking over our shoulder and just about coping to keep on top of things," says Simon Coughlin, CEO of Buichladdich. "As soon as Tropos was fully installed and the whole business had become comfortable with using it, we finally had the time and resource to start looking towards growth and how we can push the business forward."

Now that all the financial and accounting information is interfaced with the Tropos system, it has become easier for members of staff to pull reports and actionable data at all levels of the business. It tracks every purchase order going through the business—from orders in the distillery, to a bulk order of lids, to keyrings in the gift shop. It also provides greater transparency of business data, equipping managers with real-time information to make informed and accurate decisions as the business develops. The fact that all this information is available in one system not only makes reporting easier, but it also increases collaboration and unity across all departments at all levels.

“We can now actually trust all of our reports and numbers,” continues Simon. “Previously, if margins weren’t quite right, we couldn’t find what had been missed off and from where. The beauty is that we can now pinpoint any discrepancies in reports quickly and effectively, which reduces the risk of any issues escalating. It’s just reassuring knowing that we have the tools to identify the scale of potential issues—such as if we were to send out an order with the wrong lids. It gives us a level of security and assurance that we previously didn’t have when working from spreadsheets. This in turn has helped inform our business decisions. It’s fundamentally changed the business for the better.”

Looking to the future

With the 15–20 users now able to access the system remotely from a variety of devices, the team at Bruichladdich continues to use Epicor Tropos as the backbone of the distillery’s operations. Since implementing Tropos, the business has grown drastically. Originally distributing to around 20 countries, the business now distributes to more than 60, and growth shows no sign of slowing down. In fact, the forecast is that in 2017 it will be distributing 320,000 cases around the world—a colossal increase from the 5,000 cases it distributed in 2001. The introduction of Tropos means that there is greater automation in the business’ processes—such as automatic billing and order placements—enabling the company to streamline the way it works and prepare for future technological opportunities—like Industry 4.0.

“We’re focussing on growth, and with Tropos in place, we are able to continue looking forward, and that is the beauty of it. It’s supported us along the way, and it will continue to be a vital resource in our future,” concludes Simon.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software that is designed around the needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 40 years of experience with our customers’ unique business processes and operational requirements is built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With a deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions spur growth while managing complexity. The result is powerful solutions that free your resources so you can grow your business. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.



Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

+44 1344 468468 info.uk@epicor.com www.epicor.com/uk

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

The contents of this document are for informational purposes only and are subject to change without notice. Epicor Software Corporation makes no guarantee, representations or warranties with regard to the enclosed information and specifically disclaims, to the full extent of the law, any applicable implied warranties, such as fitness for a particular purpose, merchantability, satisfactory quality or reasonable skill and care. This document and its contents, including the viewpoints, dates and functional content expressed herein are believed to be accurate as of its date of publication, May 2017. The results represented in this testimonial may be unique to the particular user as each user’s experience will vary. The usage of any Epicor software shall be pursuant to the applicable end user license agreement and the performance of any consulting services by Epicor personnel shall be pursuant to applicable standard services terms and conditions. Usage of the solution(s) described in this document with other Epicor software or third party products may require the purchase of licenses for such other products. The results represented in this testimonial may be unique to the particular user as each user’s experience will vary. Epicor, the Epicor logo and Tropos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Epicor Software Corporation in the United States, certain other countries and/or the EU. All other trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. Copyright © 2017 Epicor Software Corporation. All rights reserved.