



Axminster Carpets

Company Facts

- Location: United Kingdom and Ireland
- Industry: Carpet Manufacturing
- Number of Locations: 3
- Web site: www.axminster-carpets.co.uk

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Tony Biggs, Finance Director | Axminster Carpets

Axminster Carpets Limited is one of Britain’s best known quality brands, and one of the world’s premier carpet manufacturers. The Axminster weave was developed in Axminster 250 years ago and 100% pure wool products are still manufactured in Axminster, Devon for major corporate and retail customers.

Traditionally a producer of woven carpets, Axminster Carpets responded to the increasing popularity of tufted products, acquiring a tufting plant at Newbridge in Ireland (Curragh Tintawn Carpets Limited) in 1994 to supply the Irish and UK markets.

With a steady turnover of around £30 million a year and around 600 employees, Axminster Carpets is a private company that maintains its quality reputation with tight control over its commercial levers and costs. The Axminster Carpets Group is vertically integrated enabling it to control the whole manufacturing process “from fleece to floor” and achieve efficiency and productivity at all levels. Its own spinning mill in nearby Buckfastleigh scours, cards, spins and dyes the yarn used in the carpet production process.

It was this drive to keep in house control over the business, cost efficiently, that led Axminster Carpets management to implement the full scope of the Tropos ERP system and CODA Financials. After one year, the company has achieved substantial savings in yarn wastage at its Axminster manufacturing plant, and carpet stock management has improved significantly.

Plans are in place to implement Tropos at Buckfastleigh and Newbridge, in order to optimise production and better manage the movement of goods within the Group.

Success Highlights

Challenges

- Manage stock control to reduce wastage
- Ensure optimised production
- Consolidate multiple ERP systems on one platform

Solution

- Epicor Tropos ERP

Benefits

- Dramatically reduced wastage
- Better reporting capability
- Ability to respond faster

Three Reasons To Choose Tropos

Axminster Carpets had planned to invest in a new ERP solution some time before speaking to Epicor. However, an unexpected business development delayed the tender process and replacement of its 18 year old mainframe based system became urgent.

The company identified potential suppliers with experience in the carpet industry, and made contact with Epicor as they had installed Tropos at Brinton Carpets in the Midlands and Cormar Carpets in Bury. Axminster Carpets considered two other software companies, including its incumbent system supplier.

According to Finance Director, Tony Biggs, Axminster Carpets chose Tropos over its competitors for three main reasons. “We wanted to be able to develop the system as we needed to, in house, without relying on the supplier all the time. Tropos gives us that ability through Epicor software development toolkits.”

The software development toolkits provide the ability to generate customised Tropos transactions so that standard Tropos screens can be supplemented by custom-written applications that use standard Tropos features to provide the best possible match to the business processes. The software development toolkits also enable third-party packages to be easily integrated with Tropos.

“Secondly, we wanted to have a cost-effective route for future upgrades taking advantage of Epicor continual software development,” says Tony Biggs. “We checked with other users of Tropos and found upgrade costs were relatively modest. This was quite different from other suppliers who need to make costly bespoke changes to their software. Because we use Epicor software development toolkits, we can implement the upgrade in house—and are in the process of doing so.”

The third reason why Axminster Carpets chose Tropos was, in the words of Tony Biggs, “because it offered a total solution that we could roll out across the Group, enabling us to consolidate information with commonality across all processes, from wool purchasing to delivery of finished product.”

Substantial Reduction in Yarn Wastage

Axminster Carpets is using Tropos to provide visibility and control over production scheduling, yarn deliveries and stock management. Its objectives are to minimise changeover on the looms and keep them optimised, and to reduce wastage of materials.

So far, Tropos has helped Axminster Carpets significantly in reducing its yarn wastage and improving its stock management—the company expects that production scheduling will become much more efficient when Tropos is implemented at the Buckfastleigh spinning mill.

Key to wastage reduction is the speed with which stock information is now available from Tropos, enabling management to respond faster to adjust deliveries and stock levels. “We now review yarn stockholding levels every month,” Tony Biggs says. “It was such a horrendous task to gather all the data together before that we only used to produce yarn stock reports every six months and then it took 2-3 weeks at best to complete.”

Tropos reporting capability is “a big plus” for Axminster Carpets, according to Tony Biggs, although he believes the company is not yet exploiting all its reporting potential. “We have a lean IT department so the Tropos tools are invaluable to us although we need to improve our level of training. We should then see tremendous benefits coming through.”

Multi-Site Implementation Means Tropos Will Pay Dividends

Key to unlocking those benefits will be the implementation of Tropos at Buckfastleigh and Newbridge. Both sites operate independent systems and consolidating on a Tropos platform will help Axminster Carpets to improve production scheduling and make the movement of goods a more efficient process.

“We will really begin to get hold of material scheduling, which obviously embraces production planning, when we implement

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Tropos at Buckfastleigh,” says Tony Biggs. “Tropos will pay dividends in our ability to manage our group production facilities more efficiently.”

The major benefit of implementing Tropos in Newbridge is to gain control over finished products moving between the UK and Ireland. “Then stock movements will be managed as location movements, whereas at the moment we have to go through the whole sales order processing and inventory routine on separate systems.”

Axminster Carpets has laid a firm foundation for the future based on Tropos. “Epicor is a very professional outfit and Tropos offers us the potential to manage efficiently all Group operational activities in a cost effective and uniform manner in the years ahead.”

About Epicor

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