

Epicor helps timber manufacturer bring staff together over one system across the business

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Lincolnshire, UK
- ▶ Industry: Timber importer and manufacturer
- ▶ Web site: www.johnbrash.co.uk

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Limited functionality of legacy product

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® BisTrack™

Benefits

- ▶ Modern inventory management
- ▶ EDI
- ▶ Ability to trade timber in packs
- ▶ Fully integrated financial system



John Brash was established in Hull in 1905 and the family owned business has been trading from its current site alongside the River Trent since the 1960s. John Brash has a worldwide reputation for the supply of high quality timber products for the construction industry, most notably for the development and manufacture of factory graded roofing battens, commercial quality anti-slip decking and pre-treated fire retardant scaffold boards.

The John Brash team went live with Epicor BisTrack software in 2013 after using a legacy product installed nearly 20 years earlier. "The limited functionality had worked reliably and well," remembered Supply Chain Director, Steve Parkinson. "However business requirements were very different back then. There is a huge thirst for information in modern businesses and we were producing more and more stand alone systems and spreadsheets to get the information we needed. Essentially we needed modern inventory management, EDI, and a system that could work with timber packs as well as other units of measure."

The team started to look at systems in 2008 but the project was put on hold when the financial crisis hit. A key driver to pick it up again was the June 2012 stocktake which, although showing a zero variance overall, also showed a variance for every product. Steve said, "We looked at the figures and saw that we weren't in control— it was time to change!"

System 'must haves' for John Brash included EDI (they were paying penalties to buying groups because they couldn't trade electronically); real-time transactions (so as soon as a pack is produced, it shows in the system); the ability to trade in packs (in cubic or linear metres); full supplier to customer traceability to satisfy the requirements of PEFC and FSC); absolute real-time accuracy of stock (to save running down to the yard to conduct mini stock counts); a fully integrated financial system showing accurate sales and margins at the end of each week and, finally, a system that could be developed with the company as it moved forward into the future.

Decisions can be made quickly in a family business. After a visit to a BisTrack reference site in Sept 2012, they knew the system was right and would fulfill all requirements. In January 2013 Steve was given the role of Project Manager and set up a team to manage the implementation. Managing Director, Chris Watson explained, "It was essential that everyone in the group was committed to the project so we made sure they all understood the benefits BisTrack would bring to the business. In fact everyone considered it one of the most exciting things John Brash had done in a long time!"

Thirty two users logged on to BisTrack on 1st July 2013 after an implementation process that included some extensive modifications by the Epicor team to develop a bespoke 'quick pack processing' feature within the works orders module. (This feature became available to all BisTrack customers as part of the next software release.) It's a way of transacting packs on the shop floor and generating printed labels so every pack is traceable via its unique pack number and barcode. This was seen as something of a revolution by the team as they had not used barcode technology before or used computer work stations in the production areas.

Benefits were obvious immediately after the implementation. The sales team became more confident in the availability of stock and orders were being sent and invoiced electronically. The BisTrack Scan Track module was installed to scan in proof of deliveries and other documents that are all linked to an order using its barcode. According to Chris Watson, John Brash already had an enviable reputation for customer service and BisTrack has

not only helped them maintain it but also to improve it. "We can see live information about our 'on time-in full' deliveries when we are talking to customers and inform them just how well we are doing. They really like this and it reflects how good our performance is."

Steve Parkinson believes the system has changed the culture of the business too. Before BisTrack, time and paper would be wasted producing reports for discussion. Now, using a terminal in the meeting room, live information within BisTrack can be projected for the whole team to see and interrogate together. Chris has key reports generated automatically overnight so he can study delivery performance, orders on hand, and stock profiles before he arrives at the office. He said, "I come in knowing exactly what position we are in and can immediately focus upon anything which may not have gone to plan."

Stock counts used to involve 40 people and last two full days. The company had to stop trading and hand write any sales enquiries that came in. Now just ten members of staff can conduct a stock count. It takes a day and a half while orders can still be entered in BisTrack. Barcodes on the packs save counting every bundle and confirm the location. A back up team checks the right product is scanned. Fortnightly perpetual stock takes have also been introduced and run smoothly. The stock valuation used to take two to three weeks to work out—now it happens instantaneously!

Before BisTrack, works order processing was carried out manually using a chitty system. Often products were treated and shipped out before they were entered into the system. That meant stock on the system was always incorrect. The new quick pack process is used for all manufacturing processes and keeps all the information up to date in BisTrack with all relevant cost centres built in. It shows the team accurate costings and properly allocated, traceable packs.

The best thing about BisTrack according to Steve Parkinson is how he now has a 'world view' of the business at his fingertips. "I can look at what volumes are being processed, how many orders are being taken and what stock we have. And I can be 100% confident that what I'm looking at is right!"

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, hosted, 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.



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