

The Cookie Man Ltd



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OVERVIEW

Established in 1979, Esher-based baked products manufacturer The Cookie Man supplies supermarkets such as Co-op, Tesco, Sainsbury, Morrison and Waitrose. It's a highly competitive industry, driven by a continual need to improve productivity, cut costs, and reduce wastage.

In late 2010, The Cookie Man responded by launching an initiative to drive manufacturing efficiency, greater visibility, control and lean processes on the manufacturing shop floor. To achieve this, the company decided that it would augment its Lakeview ERP system—with which it was otherwise delighted—with a specialist 'add on' package focused upon providing detailed management and visibility for factory-centric operations.

“As an ERP system, Lakeview did everything we wanted,” says The Cookie Man's general manager Jayson Scheib. “But we needed to monitor manufacturing operations at a more granular level of detail in order to drive manufacturing performance higher.”





CHALLENGE

And to try to get the desired level of visibility, the business had become reliant on a number of spreadsheets and paper-based systems, he explains. By 2010, Cookie Man had outgrown these dated methods which were onerous to manage, not to mention the frequent re-keying of data.

“We would spend hours entering data into paper forms, and then copying the information into the ERP system, checking records and trying to resolve conflicts and errors,” says Charles McIntosh, The Cookie Man’s supply chain manager.

The business needed visibility of real-time shop-floor data to support lean activities to continue to drive cost out of the manufacturing process.



SOLUTION

Coincidentally, Lakeview had already recognised the need for additional visibility into manufacturing operations. Even as recently as five years ago, most Lakeview customers had only a limited interest in such a capability, explains Lakeview managing director Mark Greatrex. But today, he says, many more are expressing an interest.

And, firmly-focused on its industry-leading accounting, manufacturing planning and distribution capabilities, Lakeview chose to meet that interest through a partnership with specialist vendor Mestec, and Mestec’s Manufacturing Smart Box system.

A touch-screen and barcode-based factory-focused solution that is designed to track, trace and report on key aspects of the entire production process from goods receipt to despatch, the Mestec Manufacturing Smart Box system has been designed from the ground up to complement existing ERP systems.

It was an offering that had strong appeal, says The Cookie Man’s Scheib. And even more appealing was Mestec’s carefully-phased implementation approach, which contrasted sharply with the ‘big bang’ resource-intensive implementations associated with competing systems.

“We advocate a step-by-step implementation, gradually adding aspects of the Manufacturing Smart Box, generating benefits and ROI at each stage,” says Mestec managing director Jeremy Harford. “And then, when they’re all joined up, there’s a cumulative benefit, and an even bigger return on investment.”



RESULTS

Which is exactly what happened, says The Cookie Man’s Scheib. Three months after deciding to go ahead, an initial six-workstation system was up and running, immediately generating tangible benefits. And the initial ROI was an impressive two months.

Stock checks, for instance, which would have previously taken days to carry out, are now completed in hours. And staff previously allocated to data-entry have been redeployed to more productive activity.

“Beyond the rapid payback period, the efficiency improvements we have made have enabled us to increase manufacturing capacity,” sums up Scheib. “Furthermore, the improved stock control has reduced wastage, and will enable us to reduce the cash tied up in stock.”

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