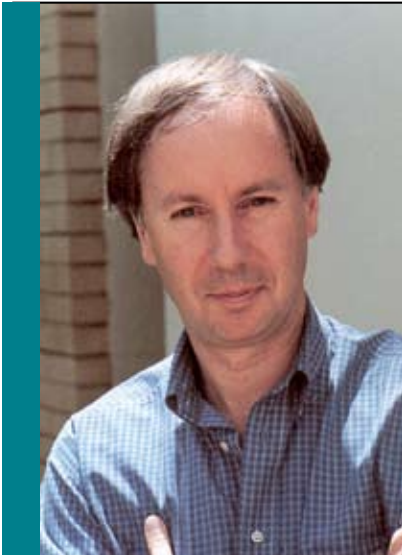


CEO's message

Phil Duff – CEO SYSPRO



As part of our commitment to increasing the numbers of competent professionals in the SYSPRO community, we have launched two new initiatives. The first is the Academic Alliance, a program whereby SYSPRO partners with educational institutions to ensure that graduates receive good exposure to SYSPRO as part of their academic course.

The SYSPRO Academic Alliance is already up and running at the St. Francis Xavier University's Schwartz School of Business and Information Systems in Canada. SYSPRO was introduced into the Schwartz School's educational degree programs in September this year.

The software will be used extensively in many courses which lead to a Bachelor of Information Systems degree and has the potential to be

a significant building block in integrating information system technology within the business curriculum. In addition, SYSPRO will be employed in a number of faculty and honors students' research projects as they explore the efficiency and effectiveness of competing software technologies in achieving integrated supply chain management solutions.

We are currently holding discussions with a number of other educational institutions around the world. Institutions are welcome to make enquiries about the Academic Alliance at their local SYSPRO office. The software will be made available at no charge, so the only cost to the institution is the annual license fee.

The second prong of this campaign is the global launch of the SYSPRO Certification program, which encompasses a uniform worldwide process for SYSPRO consultants to become certified within the SYSPRO environment.

SYSPRO Certification provides a consistent measure of the consultant's knowledge of the SYSPRO products and environment. Our objective with this program is to formally recognize the expertise of individuals who add value to the SYSPRO product suite through their knowledge and expertise in configuring and deploying SYSPRO to meet the unique requirements of our customer base across a wide variety of



industries and business models.

A further advantage is that SYSPRO Certification will create an environment of continuous learning and set the bar for raising expertise and knowledge levels among the consultancy community that supports our product suite, thereby improving the level and quality of customer service to SYSPRO's community of end users.

Initially, the new SYSPRO Certification program will be rolled out worldwide to our value added resellers. Thereafter, it will be made available directly to end users who wish to have their SYSPRO knowledge and expertise measured through a formalized program.

One of the key design considerations of the SYSPRO Certification program is to ensure that SYSPRO consultants are able to participate in

the program from their home country, ensuring ease of access and minimal disruption to their regular work schedules. To achieve these desired outcomes, consultants can take the certification exams over the Internet.

From a product perspective, over the next few months we are ramping up our efforts to convert the fixed style reports

to Crystal Reports technology, so that they can be easily customised in SYSPRO Reporting Services. There are more than 600 of these reports, and over 400 still need to be converted. To ensure it can be achieved as quickly as possible, two new development teams have been established to focus purely on this objective. As the reports are completed, they will be made publicly avail-

able on a regular basis.

On the note of these exciting developments, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and wish you all a joyful festive season and prosperous 2008. ■

Phil Duff
CEO
SYSPRO



Ontario Drive & Gear: A Lean, Mean Production Machine

In 2003, Michael Eckardt, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer of Ontario Drive & Gear (ODG), presided over a revolution in the company's production system. "We began implementing LEAN changes after I read the book LEAN Thinking by James Womack," he says. "The ideas Womack presented seemed to answer a number of issues we were struggling with at the time, such as high inventory levels and our inflexibility when it came to satisfying our customers."

ODG was founded in Kitchener, Ontario, in 1962. Now operating from a 105,000 sq .ft. manufacturing facility in New Hamburg, Ontario, ODG has built an enviable reputation for the design and manufacture of quality gears and transmissions, as well as for the distribution of KTR Power Transmission Couplings, and for its flagship product, the ARGO (an amphibious all-terrain vehicle). The company has 175 employees, uses SYSPRO to integrate its data, and boasts annual sales of \$45 million.

To understand the transition made by ODG's production system, one has to know a little about the philosophy of LEAN itself. On its simplest level, the LEAN objective is to create a constant process of intelligent reflection that serves to simplify processes and eliminate waste at every level of business activity.

This in turn reduces inventory levels, reduces lead times, increases quality and productivity, and



positively impacts customer satisfaction and the bottom line. No wonder, then, that Michael Eckardt and ODG turned to LEAN as they looked toward the increasingly competitive marketplace of the 21st century.

For Eckardt, one of LEAN's most attractive ideas was the concept of the Pull System. "We went from large batches to single piece flow. Every one of our ARGOS is sold before it's made—that's the pulling. In the old days we'd have up to 200 ARGOS in our inventory that nobody wanted. We'd have last year's models, the wrong colors, the wrong accessories. We'd made them to forecasts which seemed reasonable at the time, but nobody wanted them. Single-piece flow has reduced our product obsolescence, warranty and rework."

Implementing the Pull System has also made ODG products amenable to customization. Before LEAN, the company couldn't sell machines without

batteries, because leaving the battery out would have created an unmanageable number of new models. With LEAN, it lets the customers pull the production based on their needs and wants.

To keep the assembly line rolling, ODG implemented a Monitor System. Incoming orders are scanned every 10 minutes and, based on part number and shipping date, a list is produced on a computer in our fabrication department. ODG simply makes the parts listed. Punch in the order in the front, and it appears on a screen on the shop floor.

To keep inventory to a minimum, ODG gives its employees one primary instruction: "Never let the basket run out," says Eckardt, "but don't make more than fits in the basket." To deal with the accounting and inventory control, ODG practices back flushing, which assigns cost data to operations after the goods are

produced. "SYSPRO allows us to do that through .Net objects. That saves us countless hours in data entry every day."

All in all, says Eckardt, going LEAN adds up to improved efficiency and a fatter bottom line. "It's been working really

well. Our lead time has been reduced by as much as 90% - without paperwork. There were times in the past when a special order might have taken six weeks, now it takes three days. That makes our customers happy."

However, he believes the biggest benefit from LEAN was the change in corporate culture that opened up the company's collective creativity. "Allowing the shop floor workers to come up with ideas - that's when we began to see the real power of LEAN," he says. ■

Leading filing products, manufacturer shifts to SYSPRO

systems. They even manage our servers remotely, which enables us to run the business confident in the knowledge that our IT is in good hands."

Setten and Durward is using Finance and Advanced Warehouse Management modules to help provide a clear view of stock and transactions and is configuring the Manufacturing (MRP) module to provide control of the manufacturing process at its factory in Llandrindod Wells in Wales.

SYSPRO's financial capabilities streamline Setten and Durward's accounting and finance procedures. Transaction processing allows Setten and Durward to look at the current year and review performance against two earlier periods. By using the system's financial report writers, the company can produce a wide range of report formats and analyses, which can be printed or viewed remotely via a Web browser.

Controlling Setten and Durward's huge stock volumes is simplified using SYSPRO's Advanced Warehouse Management module. This not only provides highly accurate inventory control, it also expedites stock picking and put-away. The company's SYSPRO solution is dealing with two streams of product: UK manufactured and items manufactured and imported from suppliers in the Far East.

The warehouse system uses barcode label printing and scanning. Labels are printed directly from SYSPRO and warehouse personnel read these using handheld scanners. The use of the barcode label ensures that the right products are stored in the correct bins. When it comes to picking orders it means that the operator can work quickly and confidently, knowing that the system will guide him or her to items that match the pick list.

Enabling efficient management of the warehouse is an important feature of the system for Setten and Durward. The company has a wide range of customers ranging from major high street chains to independent stockists. Therefore, orders must be picked accurately and dispatched quickly to meet customer demands and maintain maximum customer satisfaction. ■



Setten and Durward, a leading independent UK manufacturer and supplier of filing products, has chosen SYSPRO to replace its ageing Infocflow system. The company has adopted a phased approach to implementing SYSPRO, and is confident it will reap benefits quickly.

Recently, Setten and Durward outsourced its complete IT management to K3 Business Technology Group (K3). This arrangement is already representing a significant saving by eradicating the need for in-house IT support and resulted in the smooth running of the company's integrated SYSPRO 6.0 system, network and servers.

Commenting on the support service from K3, Theresa Morris, Finance Manager of Setten and Durward, says: "This is an extremely good service for us. The K3 team is very responsive and provides full support for our

Moma Mineral Sands goes operational with SYSPRO

The multi-million dollar Kenmare Resources heavy minerals processing project at Moma in Mozambique uses SYSPRO to run its entire operation. The solution is connected via satellite for remote management by Kenmare, the holding company of the project which is based in Dublin, Ireland.

After the Mozal aluminum project near Maputo, the Moma project is the second-largest project to date in Mozambique and uses extensive processes and equipment. Significantly, it is located in one of the poorer and less developed areas of the country, where in full production it will provide employment for about 500 workers.

Derek Kemp, IT Project Manager of Kenmare Resources, says SYSPRO was chosen based on its price, functionality and ease of use. "Additional factors included the powerful report writing capabilities, strength in remote access and multi-currency capability," Kemp says. The implementation of the SYSPRO solution was completed in less than six months.

The Moma Mine is using SYSPRO to run its accounts, stores, logistics, processing, sales, production costing and Work in Progress. In addition, the mine is running third-party payroll and planned maintenance software which is fully integrated into SYSPRO.

Kenmare Resources is listed on the Irish and London Stock Exchanges and has its head office in Dublin. From there, staff connect remotely to SYSPRO, initiate the sales cycle, post entries in the general ledger and draw reports as required. The company also has an office in Maputo in Mozambique which is connected to the system.

Moma Mine uses SYSPRO reports throughout its business, including areas such as fixed asset tracking, inventory control, product costing and plant depreciation. As a start-up operation,



control of spares is critical to keep teething problems to a minimum. Product costing is also extremely important, as the mine has a license agreement with the Mozambique Government which caters for royalties to be paid instead of company tax for a period of time.

The project is being conducted under a \$265-million engineering, processing and construction contract by a joint venture between subsidiaries of Bateman Engineering and Multiplex of Australia.

The plant has been designed for an operational life of 22 years to process sands containing 4.3% of heavy minerals composed of ilmenite, zircon and rutile. An annual heavy minerals production of about 800,000 tons is expected. Moma will have the lowest production costs after the existing Richards Bay operation in South Africa.

The project will have the capacity to produce 800,000 tons of ilmenite, 21,000 tons of rutile and 56,000 tons of zircon each year. Titanium dioxide pigment is used in paints, paper and plastic production. The primary applications for zircon are in the manufacture of opacifiers for ceramic tile production and for refractory products used in the steel and foundry industries. ■





Dudson selects SYSPRO to support burgeoning business

increasing profitability and supporting its ISO management framework.

Ervin Davis, Strategic Support Director of Dudson, says: "We have high expectations from SYSPRO and plan to achieve a range of objectives as we move forward with the system. This includes a significant boost to our customer service levels, higher profitability through increased efficiencies, speedier access to information, and greater employee satisfaction through the use of intuitive software. We also see this as an opportunity for mutual success, with K3 gaining our custom and with us benefiting from K3's expertise."

With SYSPRO, Dudson will see immediate benefits from total visibility of information that will allow the company to work smarter and gain greater control of its operations. SYSPRO will enable in-depth analysis of the company's business, allowing management to pinpoint the most profitable lines and easily measure turnover and customer service levels. Also, SYSPRO will standardize Dudson's IT infrastructure and optimize communications between each department within the organization.

Based in Stoke-on-Trent, Dudson chose SYSPRO to replace its ageing Siemens Nixdorf system, which over the years has been augmented with several other information sources such as spreadsheets and personal records. The company urgently needed a single data source and singled SYSPRO out from a host of competitors as the most flexible and well supported package.

"The K3 team won us over with its approach. The team listened and questioned everything from the outset; no-one made any assumptions. The recommendation for SYSPRO was based solely on what we needed and the outcomes we desired. The team's feedback and interaction gave us great confidence in K3 knowing exactly what was required and will be required in the future," Davis says.

The Staffordshire tableware manufacturer leads the way in design, product performance and manufacturing technology by operating to the management standard of ISO 9001:2000 for consistency in quality. Every piece produced in its Finest Vitrified range carries the BS4034 Kitemark for quality of the manufacturing process. Not surprisingly, the company issued an extremely exacting brief for its new ERP system to ensure that it would underpin every area of Dudson's business in line with its key performance indicators.

"Without a doubt, SYSPRO will enable us to move our processes up to the high standards we achieve for our products.. SYSPRO is a major investment and we would not have made it if we did not expect a return on investment," Davis says. ■

Leading ceramic tableware manufacturer The Dudson Group has chosen SYSPRO 6.0 Issue 010 from K3 Business Technology Group (K3) to support the evolution and expansion of its burgeoning business.

SYSPRO will integrate all areas of Dudson's operations, both in the UK and overseas, giving the management team a clear view of the entire business. Dudson has elected to include a comprehensive suite of SYSPRO modules, including Advanced Warehouse Management, CRM, Time & Attendance, Shop Floor Data Collection, Payroll & Personnel, and Manufacturing.

Installation of the solution took place in October, and the go-live target is April 2008. The implementation will help Dudson optimize its operations, thereby boosting productivity,

SYSPRO helps Toyota Tsusho Steel Centre sustain waste elimination philosophy

Toyota Tsusho Steel Centre Australia (TTSCA) is an associate company of Toyota Tsusho Japan, established in 2004 to process coil steel and produce automotive body 'blanks'. Using state-of-the-art press machinery sourced from Japan, TTSCA supplies flat blanks to Toyota Australia, which in turn presses these shapes into door, roof, chassis and other car panels.

TTSCA adds value for Toyota Australia by improving raw material yields and supply chain efficiency, maintaining stringent quality control and adopting Toyota production system techniques to minimize inventory levels. By eliminating some of its in-house blank pressing, Toyota Australia has gained additional capacity within its own press shop.

The manufacturing operations are complex and massive. The blanking line alone required an AUD\$15 million investment and involved the set up of a coil feed line with a series of rollers and levelers, a Komatsu press and purpose-built stacker to accumulate the parts into Kanban packs. Around 100 different shapes and pieces are produced with the capacity of 500 pieces per day.



A functionally rich and flexible ERP solution was required to meet the key challenge of maintaining optimal efficiency.

SYSPRO selected for broad functionality

SYSPRO was selected for its flexibility in manufacturing and distribution, to help TTSCA manage its financial, manufacturing and distribution operations. SYSPRO channel partner AR Consulting was also crucial to the process.

Crucially, Toyota Australia operates on a Just-In-Time (JIT) and Kanban system. Kanban is a Japanese concept where stock is replenished as it is used - so suppliers must react and respond to real production needs and not predictions or forecasts. Working this way eliminates spikes and

troughs and regulates working capital. When one Kanban card is empty, it triggers the next inventory supply, as Toyota needs to receive parts continuously to maintain optimum production.

Gulsum Dunderdale, Finance Manager for TTSCA, says: "This underpins Toyota's whole philosophy, which is about eliminating waste. It is premised on continuity or pull at the other end - working to a steady beat."

SYSPRO has an e-Kanban capability, so TTSCA will soon operate electronic Kanbans replenished by bar-coding to track product movements. "The need for us to be a flawless supplier in the automotive industry is clear. There are 118 parts that need to be supplied. We mirror Toyota Australia's production cycle so the assembly line cannot stop," Dundersale says.

The Benefits of SYSPRO

Although ROI was not officially measured, Dunderdale believes the SYSPRO implementation would have paid for itself within 18 months.

SYSPRO's Lot Traceability module meets auto industry demands for high levels of quality assurance as well as ISO requirements. In addition, TTSCA relies heavily on superior inventory tracking.

"SYSPRO has great lot and pack traceability which is essential to plan our business and achieve optimum production



scheduling. If we don't have a clear understanding of exactly what we have, we're losing money because we're over-ordering or ordering the wrong thing," Dunderdale points out.

"Also, stocktake is very good in SYSPRO - I haven't seen it working this well in any other program. It's a big issue for us because we take stock every month. We're not losing anything from our adjustments because we can view every detail. We have different coil tonnages which provide maximum efficiency for different jobs. SYSPRO helps us identify the most efficient tonnage and as a

result has improved our profitability and efficiency."

Another major benefit is that SYSPRO provides a complete package so there is no need to source additional functionality like EDI or bar-coding from third parties. Furthermore, the .NET platform enables the system to be kept open for communicating with both Toyota Australia and its steel mill suppliers.

Future direction

Toyota is renowned for quality and, with the operational success experienced by TTSCA, there may

be expansion to supply other car manufacturers. "With the new line, we won't have to reinvent the wheel," Dunderdale says. "We know the system and how it works, so it will be very inexpensive for us. The value of SYSPRO to our organization is immeasurable and it will easily extend to another line when we expand.

"We would also like to showcase TTSCA in Australia and SYSPRO system to other Toyota companies. What we're doing in Australia is unique in terms of processing capability and automation of processes." ■

Outperforming the Limits of ERP

By Meryl Malcomess, Marketing Director, SYSPRO South Africa



SYSPRO has adopted a new icon, the champion South African athlete Oscar Pistorius. Oscar is the Paralympics world record-holder of the 100, 200 and 400 meter sprints. Born with a unique opportunity to make his own footprint, Oscar's special ability to combine the human body and technology has proved to be unstoppable on the race track and in all aspects of his life.

Oscar's determination, competitive spirit and ability to turn challenges into opportunities reflect SYSPRO'S unique position in the ERP market. The pervasiveness of bigger brands and standardization of solutions has meant that potential customers are presented with less and less choice. SYSPRO's point of difference in a shrinking sea of bigger international players is that the company operates on a human scale, unlike other publicly-owned multinationals. For our customers, SYSPRO's emphasis is on the human factor amid the challenges of choosing and implementing an ERP solution.

SYSPRO makes a strong case for a 'three-degrees-of-freedom' strategy, implying not only replacement of technology but organizational restructuring and improvement of the company's business processes. What is important here is that that the organization - and not

the vendor - takes ownership of the process. Through the capabilities of e.net solutions, each process can be defined by the user to fit the company's needs. SYSPRO understands that a mature ERP strategy is democratic. Much more than just a choice of technology, a successful implementation relies on teamwork to align the system with the business strategy and processes.

Key to SYSPRO's democratization of ERP is the client company's Seeker of Value. This is a person or team, usually in top management positions, who 'sponsor' the progress of implementation. It is the role of the Seeker to optimize the value of ERP throughout the company. The project sponsor communicates the shared vision of the organization and the role of the new system and structures to employees. Their commitment is critical to drive consensus and to oversee the

entire lifecycle of the implementation.

The role of the Seeker of Value combines the facets of the architect, the translator and the coach in relation to the implementation team. This team is composed of a mix of consultants and designers from SYSPRO and the Value Added Reseller, as well as the internal staff.

Like the architect, the seeker should understand the impact of an ERP implementation and help to structure the organization's expectations, as well as aid design of the business solution. Like the translator, the seeker's role is to ensure that vital sharing of information takes place between the organization and the implementation partners. Like the coach, the Seeker of Value sets key tangible milestones from the planning phase to going live.

As coach, the Seeker of Value trains the implementation team to the level of fitness required at each step. Goals are set and milestones are reached one by one, from mapping out project budgets and timelines to the training of end users and the sign-off of the final solution

As an athlete, Oscar Pistorius understands that there are many factors in winning a race: fitness; talent; agility; speed; and the fit of technologies to particular problems (and, of course, filling the gaps in between). As in the arena of ERP, the importance of these tangibles may seem obvious. However, at the finish line it is other, less tangible human elements which make the difference: determination, willpower and co-operation, whether between members of a team, or a coach and the protégé.



Aligning your company's processes with your business strategy isn't just a software choice.

It is a living entity that must keep pace with the competitive market forces around you.

Your enterprise resource planning (ERP) system needs the kind of agility that is a human balancing act beyond the capacity of technology.



The Human Spirit Pushing Boundaries

What Oscar understands better than any other athlete is the very human balancing act required to overcome your own limits. It is because SYSPRO is driven by this 'human spirit' that it will always 'outperform the limits of technology'.

The following white papers offer further reading on the topic:

- Enabling your ERP decision
- Key milestones for a one

degree of freedom implementation of an ERP solution

- Key milestones for a two degree of freedom implementation of an ERP solution
- Key milestones for a three degree of freedom implementation of an ERP solution

Please note that the last two papers will be available from December 2007. ■

Pierce Pacific grows on SYSPRO Foundation



Despite its relatively small size, Pierce Pacific Manufacturing is a world leader in the manufacture of mechanized forestry products. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, the company builds attachments for hydraulically-driven excavators which are used in forestry, mining and construction.

The attachments add considerable value to the excavators and are sold directly to customers or through OEMs and dealers, who in turn sell them to contractors. The Pierce Pacific customer base includes Caterpillar, John Deere, Komatsu and Link Belt.

For Pierce Pacific, few products are standard; most are built to order. The greatest number of any particular product sold is approximately 100 a year, and the company often makes one-of-a-kind units for one-time orders.

Pierce Pacific's competitive advantage is the range of product and the fact that it can go from idea to finished product faster than any of its competitors. However, this capability can also create challenges. For example, Pierce has a relatively high SKU count of over 200,000. Each product has numerous variations and it's typical for a customer to state, "I want something over here, a guard over there ... can you please add this ..."

The product range includes 105-ft.-long booms, attachments for the logging industry, grapples, log loaders, high-speed saws and scrap machines that move bulk materials on and off barges. The products are characterized by doing more with less manpower, producing more with fewer resources. No matter what needs to be moved, Pierce Pacific makes an attachment that efficiently meets the challenge.

Brad Sintek, Pierce Pacific Operations Manager, has overseen the company's growth for 11 years. When he joined Pierce Pacific, SYSPRO had recently been installed. For several years, only a small portion of the software was used, but as the company grew, so did its needs. Consequently, more of SYSPRO's capabilities were brought into play.

According to Sintek, a particular challenge is the production of spare parts to support the long-term life of the attachments. The company can't always predict what parts will be needed or when, so detailed records on the attachments must be maintained for several years in case a spare part is required.

It is not uncommon for parts to be ordered on machines that were built 20 years ago. Due to the uniqueness of each finished product, 30%-40% of the parts generated require brand-new



drawings to be entered into the system. SYPRO has helped meet this challenge, and currently the system is holding information on 220,000 part numbers. SYSPRO also helps the company track 2200 jobs running at any given time.

Pierce Pacific uses SYSPRO Supply Chain Transfer for warehouse logistics within three separate warehouse locations. The main warehouse is located in

Portland, with two in Canada and one in Baton Rouge, LA. Pierce has experienced recent rapid growth, expanding dramatically in the last year. Today, Operations is faced with opening and closing 50 new jobs in production daily.

"Everything we do is in SYSPRO. If we didn't have it, we couldn't do what we are currently doing with our business. SYSPRO has everything we need now and has capabilities available for future growth and expansion. What really impresses us is that SYSPRO is not a limiting factor. On the contrary, SYSPRO can more than handle what we plan for the future," Sintek says.

"The SYSPRO MRP module is very important to us. We're using it to facilitate accurate warehouse stock levels for our customers. It helps us predict future needs and is a great tool with ordering. It enables us to make better purchasing decisions

and manage our cash flow."

Shari Schneider, Controller of Pierce Pacific, gives SYSPRO kudos for the forethought in its design with an emphasis on thoroughness and completeness of its programs. "When the company grew from a national to international business by acquiring a Canadian company, the software proved its usefulness by effortlessly handling currency exchanges and valuing assets recorded in Canadian values," she says.

Sintek concludes: "As Operations Manager, I have to know about every aspect of the business and SYSPRO gives me that information. At Pierce Pacific, we have a philosophy that we need to be better today than we were yesterday, or we will not be in business tomorrow. SYSPRO's capabilities and how we use them have everything to do with that philosophy." ■

Software **for the Sole**



The factory of United Fram Footwear, a brand popularly known as Frams, has occupied its current Johannesburg premises since 1982. Committed to local manufacturing, the company was formed out of the merger of United Footwear and Fram Melrose, with Wayne Plastics being added to the stable afterwards.

Frams manufactures industrial safety footwear using five different methods of sole construction, including the most advanced technologi-

cal machinery for manufacturing gumboots. Its products are well known across a variety of diverse industries: mining, petrochemical, engineering, construction, defense, security and forestry.

Frams produces more than three million pairs of injection-molded gum boots, leather boots and shoes a year. It is estimated that every day at least a million South Africans don a pair of Frams.

Until about three years ago,

Frams was operating on a customized Unix-based system. As the system was no longer supported, Frams investigated several options including Sysmetrics, Navision and Hansaworld (at this stage SAP's entry level product was not available). SYSPRO was recommended by Jordan's, one of Fram's sister companies.

Fram's Ken Lazarus explains that SYSPRO's well-established support structure was an attractive feature. "In view of the kinds of problems Frams can experience in the day-to-day running of operations, it is important to have more than one person to service a solution," he says.

The customized solutions allowed by SYSPRO e.net solutions also played a major role in the decision, and Lazarus was impressed by the commitment of SYSPRO's internal implementation and sales division, SYSPRO Africa Support (SAS). SAS acts as a VAR within SYSPRO dealing mainly with implementation, but also with sales.

Implementation

Frams was one of SYSPRO's first direct implementations, which was unusual at the time. Immediately the benefits were fantastic. An example of this is the standard costing system which, while difficult to grasp initially, had clear benefits once understood.

One of the requirements that Frams had made clear during the negotiation stage was that each stage in the process of Frams' production must be scanned into the system. It was important for Frams that e.net solutions allowed for the writing of add-ons tailored to fit its par-



ticular needs, while still using SYSPRO's core functionality.

More than 80% of the site is run on e.net solutions, with the core product in the background. SYSPRO is important at the backend for the reporting, administration and financials. The add-ons also rely on basic SYSPRO functionality made available through business objects and .Net architecture.

The implementation was divided into three phases: sales, manufacturing and stock-take, and add-ons were developed for each of these phases. This was handled partly by third-party developers and completed by the SAS team.

The solution

Add-ons were written using a combination of Visual Basic, Visual Studio .net, Microsoft SQL and e.net. As these are ob-

ject orientated languages, the code is generally easily interpreted.

Training at Frams was streamlined as the developers had kept the interfaces as close to those of the previous system as possible. One of the advantages of e.net solutions is that it removes the complexity from end users, while the decision-making processes lie behind in the tree of SYSPRO functionality made accessible to the add-ons via the .Net architecture.

Manufacturing and e.net solutions

A job number with a unique barcode is generated and scanned into the system at each stage in the production process. For all the materials required at each stage in the production of a particular style, a barcoded stub is produced. At each stage the stub is torn off and scanned into the system by the planning department. Each label is generated by the system so that, instead of spending time writing, Frams' employees can focus on manufacturing. This also means that at the end of the process the unique code on the final



Warehouse supervisor, John Clarke, was very excited about the speed and efficiency of the new stock take system: "That system is brilliant! This was the most accurate stock-take at Fram's ever. We were finished in a day and a half, and in future stock-take should take under a day."

product is traceable to the exact date of manufacture.

The major advantage of scanning work into the system by job, as opposed to quantity, is that at any stage it is possible to get an overview of the production on the whole of the factory floor. This is done using a function called 'Shop Floor Enquiry', whereby a value for the WIP of the entire factory is generated.

According to Lazarus, this functionality is the 'showstopper'.

Warehouse and the movement of stock

Another benefit of the add-ons is that Fram's no longer relies on manually written documents. Most importantly, this has made for a major improvement in keeping track of the movement of stock between the factory floor and

the warehouse across the road. At the end of the manufacturing process, the barcode of each shoe in a box of shoes for a particular style is scanned into the system and then checked against goods accepted into the warehouse stock without any human intervention. This has made for much tighter controls. As stock codes were manually recorded previously, there had always been problems. Furthermore, possibilities for error have been built into processes such as the stock-take, making for Fram's most accurate stock-take ever.

Sales

Sales orders are generated using an ingenious matrix formula that allows multiple sizes of the same style to be ordered. This is essential for Fram's production, where many different sizes and styles are in progress simultaneously. It is also at this point that orders can be compared to the enquiries into WIP and to production histories. This kind of overview is very important for the business since Fram's makes to stock, not to order.

Challenges

While an easy learning curve for end users is one of the advantages of the .Net architecture, it sometimes takes a bit more time to get add-ons to match the complexity and variability of a company's manufacturing process. To blueprint an entire business is impossible. It is the role of SAS to be present at all stages of an implementation to ensure that the simplicity of the solution provides for the complexity of the problems that may be encountered when the system goes live. It is important for the client to understand that commitment is required from both sides. "We learnt a lot through the implementation and



development," Lazarus said.

During the stock-take phase, SAS developer Justin Steyn worked closely with Fram's systems administrator Arnold Spies, quickly and easily solving challenges presented by the scanning process. As problems occurred, such as stock codes that would not scan or that scanned incorrectly, Justin rewrote or added to existing functions to build in responses to all possible error messages. Due to division of the warehouse into zones, when the add-on picks up a problem it is able to locate it immediately. Furthermore, the problem can then be corrected without rescanning everything.

Due to this direct involvement in the stock-take, this last part of the implementation was completed on time, in budget and on spec. SAS played a role beyond maintenance, and also pledged to rectify any flaws in the software. ■



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