



# GLOBAL TALK

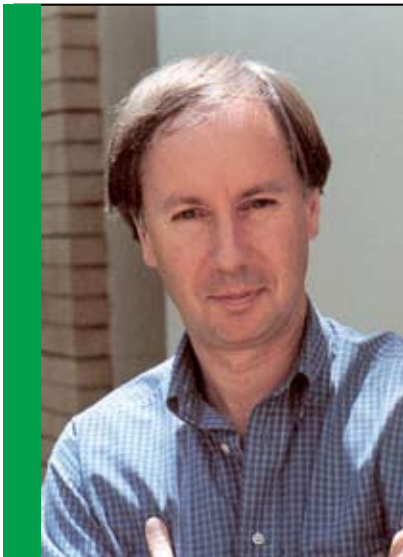
THIRD QUARTER 2007





# CEO's message

Phil Duff – CEO SYSPRO



In this issue of SYSPRO Global Talk, I would like to continue our focus on SYSPRO 6.0 Issue 010 Service Pack 1. To tell the truth, there is so much of value in Service Pack 1 that we can't cover it all in one column!

This time, the spotlight is on SYSPRO Factory Scheduling, which is introduced in SYSPRO 6.0 Issue 010 Service Pack 1. Any customer interested in scheduling would benefit from a close look at this product offering.

The SYSPRO Factory Scheduling products give you the ability to schedule the production in your factory to a detailed level, considering the capacity constraints in your environment. You have the option of three products, ranging from the less sophisticated Graphical Planning board to the very sophisticated Advanced Scheduler, the latter being classified as an

APS (Advanced Planning and Scheduling) system.

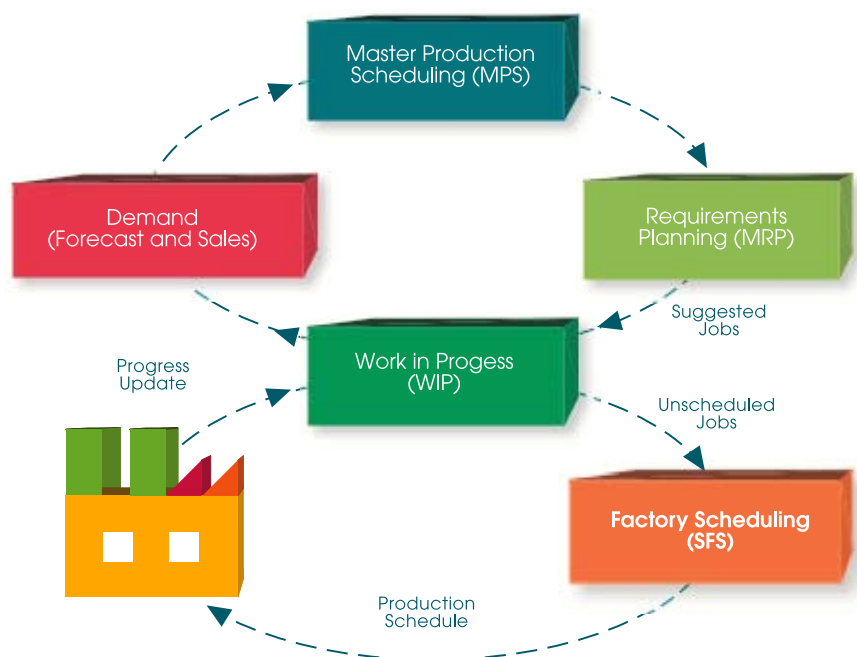
These solutions enable you to have true control of the production resources at your disposal, considering elements such as your customer requirements, the current situation on the floor, the complex constraints you face and shift patterns.

SYSPRO Factory Scheduling is the result of collaboration between SYSPRO and Preactor International, a leading provider of, and specialist in, scheduling solutions. The solutions provide the depth of features and experience of the Preactor products, structured to work elegantly and simply with the core SYSPRO manufacturing modules. In this way SYSPRO provides you with a

complete solution to manage your factory effectively.

SYSPRO Factory Scheduling offers the following features and capabilities:

- The Graphical Planning Board, a basic finite capacity scheduler with basic rules and features for automatic scheduling
- SYSPRO Finite Scheduler, which contains more sophisticated features to schedule your factory. You can model your factory more accurately using features such as transfer batches, sequence dependent set-up times, preferred resource selections, maximum operation



The Graphical Planning Board

- spans and maximum delay between operations
- SYSPRO Advanced Scheduler allows you to generate schedules of a high quality in a complex environment through the use of advanced scheduling rules and by considering the availability of components and raw materials
  - Control your production process to predict what will come out of your factory, give customers accurate and reliable due dates and provide them with updated information on the expected progress of their jobs
  - Model your unique production environment, from the constraints in your factory to the level of data required in your environment. The set-up

- of your factory model can easily be adjusted as your factory evolves to always accurately reflect the reality
- Accurately predict factory performance by anticipating the usage and service levels of your factory down to a machine level. You can also take action to ensure the desired effectiveness of your factory before it is too late
  - Keep track of customer due dates
  - Optimize utilization of the factory with automated scheduling algorithms
  - Remain agile by rescheduling as often as necessary. This is possible because of the detailed constraints that are modeled in the

- Scheduler and the use of automated scheduling rules
- Customize the solution to your requirements
  - Synchronize your production; with Factory Scheduler you will have one official schedule for the entire factory.

Of course, you will also receive support from the SYSPRO support team, backed up by the dedicated team of experts at Preactor. The products have the advantage of experience gained at several hundreds of implementations in all manufacturing industries and on all continents. ■

*Phil Duff*  
CEO  
SYSPRO

## Leading fire equipment manufacturer impressed by SYSPRO functionality

**Phillips & Smith Limited (PSL)**, a leading fire safety equipment manufacturer based in New Zealand, has reaped swift, tangible benefits by implementing a fully integrated SYSPRO solution to replace its outdated ERP system.

Ian Phillips, General Manager of PSL, says "We are just 10 weeks into the implementation and I am astonished by where we are at. We're already seeing substantial benefits in many areas, which we thought were two or three years away. It's taken a huge workload off us already."





"It's great to see a software implementation come in on budget and ahead of time. We have only just begun to explore the huge functionality in SYSPRO."

*Ian Phillips, General Manager of PSL*

PSL's main operation is the manufacture and supply of fire fighting hardware for numerous applications around the world. The company has distribution offices in Sydney and Auckland which support exports to more than 20 countries, and it also imports and distributes various commodity fire, safety and security products to Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

A huge growth in demand for commodity-based products for the consumer market drove the business need for a new, improved ERP solution with strong sales and distribution functionality. PSL's Auckland manufacturing operation runs a mix of make-to-stock, make-

to-order and jobbing environments, so the solution had to handle this and the growth in distribution with ease.

After a lengthy evaluation period in which more than 80 solutions were assessed, SYSPRO was selected for its flexibility and broad functionality. "The shift in the way we import and distribute many products made SYSPRO ideal - with its strength across manufacturing, distribution and financials," Phillips says.

Further contributing factors included SYSPRO's modern system architecture to enable easy custom reporting and integration with web-based and sales force automation applications, improved visibility of information, and the ability to drill down into detailed information.

PSL worked with consulting group Advanced ERP Consultants, using the SYSPRO STARS methodology to identify business processes and challenges well before implementation, ensuring that SYSPRO was specifically configured to suit PSL's business. "I believe STARS is one of the best implementation methodologies I have ever seen," Phillips says.

Purchased in October 2006, SYSPRO went live on 1 April

2007. Modules implemented include General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Cashbook, EFT, Assets, Contact Management, Report Writer, Inventory, Sales Orders, Sales Analysis, Purchase Orders, Landed Cost Tracking, Bill of Materials, Quotations, Work in Process, Factory Documentation, Requirements Planning, Office Automation and Business Analytics.

Users include staff from upper management through to factory and store people. Sales people use SYSPRO to access information and facilitate day-to-day decisions. While it is too early to quantify cost savings, Phillips says: "SYSPRO is saving time in staff's day-to-day duties, especially in purchasing and inspection, which is critical to our business. Previously, there was much manual intervention with two different databases storing information and the Purchasing Officer manually recording when inspection was required. SYSPRO automates this process so we're saving 40-50% of their time."

With significant growth targets over the next three to five years, the tools and additional functionality SYSPRO provides will ensure this growth can be managed with little significant increase in overheads.

"It's great to see a software implementation come in on budget and ahead of time. We have only just begun to explore the huge functionality in SYSPRO, yet have already seen savings in key areas. I have no doubt the investment has been a sound one for the company, and will continue to add value to our processes for many years to come," Phillips says. ■

## XRP revs up with SYSPRO



**C**alifornian company XRP manufactures high-performance fittings and adapters for the racing market. Its products consist of fluid transfer components which transport fuels and oils from point 'a' to point 'b' in auto, boat and other racing engines.

The company had been using a database package which served basic needs but lacked a manufacturing module with inventory tracking capabilities. With more than 5,000 individual part numbers in stock, forecasting and inventory control are vitally important to XRP's ability to fill orders timeously.

After an extensive software search that lasted 18 months, XRP settled on SYSPRO in 2002. Jarrod Barker, XRP IT Manager, comments: "We liked the whole package. SYSPRO was the best fit ... It offered a lot."

Further contributing factors were that SYSPRO USA was headquartered just 'down the road' in Costa Mesa and that the SYSPRO reseller servicing the account, Green Beret Software, was located in nearby

Huntington Beach. More than half of the 31 full-time employees at XRP now use SYSPRO on a full-time basis.

Founded in 1989, XRP has grown steadily thanks to an outstanding reputation for price competitiveness and aerospace-type product quality. Today, the company fills an average of 300 orders per month. While some are one-time only orders, the bulk represents repeat business from US and international dealers.

When SYSPRO announced a new Forecasting module as part of its new Inventory Optimization solution in late 2005, XRP was one of the first companies to go for the module. The SYSPRO Forecasting module performs forecasting at the item/warehouse level as well as aggregations of forecasting to higher levels as defined by Groupings and Families. It enables the use of a variety of forecasting algorithms, including predefined algorithms or a competition method where the system will use the mathematical formula best suited to an item's historical sales.

The SYSPRO Forecasting module takes into account seasonality and also removes outliers and anomalies. Module users have the ability to define calendars, forecast horizons, monthly or weekly time buckets and to override forecasts to accommodate market intelligence. The module stores three or more years of history and facilitates dynamic analyses with tabular and graphical reports.

After using the SYSPRO Forecasting Module for several months, Barker gives it 'two thumbs up'. "With our former software package, our inventory would often go negative. However, SYSPRO has given us superlative inventory management, among many other pluses," he says.

Barker explains that the make-to-stock company forecasts three months out, and here the SYSPRO Forecasting Module plays a key role. "The module looks at past year sales, using a forecasting algorithm that factors in a growth figure of 10%. It really works."

Summarizing XRP's experience with SYSPRO, Barker says: "SYSPRO has enabled us to speed order turnaround by bringing greater efficiencies to order management, forecasting and the manufacturing process itself." ■

# SYSPRO builds a house

**A**s part of its corporate social responsibility program, SYSPRO South Africa rolled up its sleeves and invested resources and funds in building a home for an underprivileged person.

SYSPRO collaborated with Habitat for Humanity South Africa, a non-profit, non-governmental Christian housing organization dedicated to the elimination of poverty housing in South Africa and committed to making decent shelter a matter of conscience and action.

Habitat for Humanity's objective is to build simple, decent, affordable houses in partnership with those who lack adequate shelter. Since 1996, the organisation has built almost 1500 houses in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng/North West provinces, providing shelter for 7500 people across the country and bringing together people across racial, economic, cultural and social boundaries in a common journey of hope.

Led by Paul Hollick, one of SYSPRO SA's Development Consultants, a team of SYSPRO staff got stuck in and built a house for Mpuse. SYSPRO sponsored the building materials, refreshments and transport to the site as well as artisans who showed the team how to build properly.

For someone to be considered for a Habitat for Humanity house, they must meet a few criteria. The

first prerequisite is that they must own a piece of land that is registered in their name at the Deeds Office. They also need to earn under a certain amount per month, and attend a money management course run by Habitat. This course is to help them budget to repay the cost of the house, and for ongoing maintenance. The reasoning is that people tend not to take care of things which are simply given to them, and Habitat can use the income from these home owners to fund additional houses. As much material as possible is sourced from local businesses, and where possible the artisans and laborers are local too.

The whole process was a little hectic and stressful, but the team agreed that it was all worth it just to see Mpuse's smile! ■



Mpuse's full name has been withheld to protect her privacy.

# The Evolving UK ERP Market

By Howard Joseph, Managing Director, K3 Business Technology Group



**T**he market for ERP systems in the UK has changed dramatically over the past five years. These changes have occurred in many areas but the major impact on SYSPRO as an ERP vendor has been driven by three factors:

- A shift from manufacturing in the UK to outsourcing production to Eastern Europe and Asia Pacific
- Consolidation in the ERP market as vendors merge and aggressively pursue market share
- The emergence of a new generation of ERP buyers who are far more experienced and demanding in every aspect of the purchasing process

## So what has this meant to us in the UK?

Firstly, we have had to learn how to address a whole new

set of business requirements. From being comfortable as experts in most aspects of manufacturing, distribution and finance a few years ago, we are now seeing each of those areas become deeper and broader in scope.

For example, the increasing shift from production to distribution means that areas such as warehousing, traditionally a specialist area in its own right, is now seen as part of the ERP project. Similarly, CRM is now part of the 'core' requirement.

At the same time, buyers are expecting more from the traditional application areas. This has led to a 50% increase in the size of the team we need to field pre-sales, and a re-training and re-skilling exercise for implementation staff. This has driven up the cost of sale at a time when the second factor referred to above is driving prices down.

Secondly, we are seeing the emergence of 'software super powers'. Companies like Epicor, Microsoft, SAP and Infor are now very active in our traditional markets. They have huge development budgets and their very size and apparent permanence means that in almost every prospective sale we encounter one or more of them. They are aggressive, they have attractive products and they can, and do, sell at very competitive prices.

Thirdly, the new generation of buyers, who have learned their

lessons in previous ERP procurements and implementations, are demanding far more information and proof of vendors' claims before making a commitment. This has extended sales cycles and, with factor one above, meant we had to raise our game significantly in terms of the expertise we deploy in each sales campaign.

## What can we do about this?

Well, with some things we just have to go with the flow. We can't avoid the need to deploy more expertise and we can't change our customers' or competitors' business models.

What we can do is sell smarter. We know that, at least for now, our competitors' weaknesses centre mainly around their channel and its ability to implement systems. It's one thing to develop great software but it takes far longer to develop people who know what they are doing and are credible in front of customers. And that is the area where we have always been strong.

Our culture of stability, our pragmatism, our relationships with our customers; these are all key differentiators which we are exploiting to ensure that the customer realizes that although software is important, what Ollie Wight says is as true now as it ever was. "Choosing the right software does not guarantee success. People make systems work." ■

# Gooch and Housego chooses SYSPRO as global standard

**G**lobal optical manufacturing group Gooch and Housego is standardising on SYSPRO across its European and US businesses following a period of acquisition and growth.

The group manufactures acousto-optic devices and precision optical components for use in photonics-based systems for scientific, medical and research applications. Over the past five years, the company has grown rapidly through acquisition. It now has operations in Ohio, Florida, New Jersey and Germany, and employs 250 people worldwide with an annual turnover of £25 million. Earlier this year, Gooch and Housego acquired SIFAM Fibre Optics Limited, a 93-employee, £3.9 million business based in Devon.

With four of the group's businesses previously operating semi-autonomously, Gooch and Housego embarked on a programme in 2006 - 'Project Orion' - to bring the separate companies together as a single, consolidated operation. The programme includes the standardisation of the company's business systems on SYSPRO. SYSPRO was already installed at two of the company's US sites, but it was the far-reaching benefits from its recent implementation at the UK headquarters that proved the catalyst for standardising across the group.

Gareth Jones, CEO and principle sponsor of Project Orion, says it was the next logical evolutionary step for the business. "All the businesses were doing well



in their own right but there was headroom to further improve the way we approached the market.

"We had seen how K3 had delivered global solutions for other customers, so had every confidence they could deliver for us too."

SYSPRO helps the company present one common, consistent interface worldwide. "Customers from all over the world will be able to deal with Gooch and Housego as a single operation; one common sales front and one common business style, irrespective of where the client is or where goods come from," Jones says.

Financial consolidation and control is a primary objective of the implementation, while better visibility across the group improves customer service levels and control of the supply chain. The system also offers the flexibility for each of the group companies to operate independent accounting and financial reporting, and to satisfy local territory legislative requirements. Implementation of the 75-user system was targeted for completion in August 2007.

Gooch and Housego was founded in 1948 by Archie Gooch and Leslie Housego in Ilminster, where the company's headquarters remain to this day. Traditionally a craft-based engineering company, Gooch & Housego has been transformed over the past 20 years into a high-technology business through investment in research and development.

The company is best known for the 'Q-Switch', a device that transforms solid-state lasers into industrial and medical tools producing high power pulses which can drill, cut, weld or machine materials ranging from steel and plastics to diamonds; in medicine they can cauterise or cut tissue in applications such as ophthalmic surgery or urology. ■

# The Trickle Down Effect



## SYSPRO donates software to help drive a unique drinking water delivery project

Over one billion people worldwide do not have access to clean drinking water. Half of these people live in sub-Saharan Africa. PlayPumps International is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for raising donor funds to donate PlayPump water systems to rural communities and schools. It works with partners such as national governments, water ministries, geological departments and development agencies to assist in locating boreholes.

SYSPRO has generously donated a two-user site that is being used by the manufacturing contractor Outdoor Fabrications to streamline its systems.

These water pumps are powered by children playing on The PlayPump® roundabout, which is connected to a borehole that pumps clean drinking water from below the ground to a storage tank and tap. This approach has decreased diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases and increased school attendance since pupils no longer have to fetch water from far away sources.

Roundabout Outdoor developed the PlayPump water system and is now solely focused on new installations and the maintenance of over 950 existing PlayPump installations across southern Africa.

Finding underground water may have become slightly more sophisticated than using a divining stick; but it is still a challenging business. The challenge does not end there, as stringent testing follows to ensure firstly that the borehole recharge is sustainable over a long period of time and that the quality of the water is fit for human consumption. Not all boreholes pass the test and drilling costs are not picked up by the funding raised. Large South African bank Absa recently donated R2 million for drilling over the next three years to help out.

An important aspect of the PlayPump's sustainability is the



sale of billboards around the water tower that help to fund 10 years' maintenance of the system. The billboards are used to display commercial messaging as well as community health and educational messaging.

The advertising link in the PlayPumps system was the brainchild of Trevor Field, a former advertising executive and co-founder of Roundabout Outdoor. Roundabout Outdoor trains local maintenance teams, thereby creating employment and keeping the sites

operational. There are currently six certified crews with over 70 jobs created as part of the scheme. Typically one crew is responsible for servicing a cluster of 100 pumps.

Manufacturing of the PlayPump systems and the signboards takes place at Outdoor Fabrication, located in Modderfontein. It is here that SYSPRO replaced a Pastel Accounting system, which was not sufficient for the factory's WIP. Implementation took place early last year and was up and running by August.

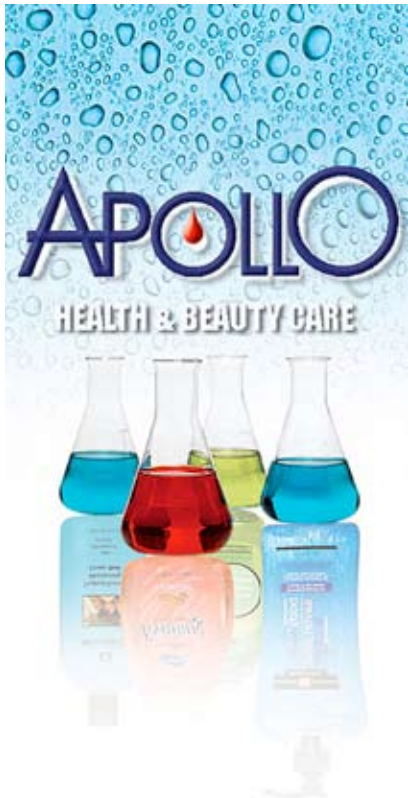
Head of Systems Maintenance, Fabrizio Volpe, had been an Impact Award user before joining Outdoor. SYSPRO's ease of use and the fit of its stock and planning functionality to Outdoor's small-to-medium operation made it the natural choice. Roundabout Outdoor and the factory work closely together, and general ledger is essential for keeping up with orders for new pumps and parts.

Outdoor employs about 30 people and until now the manufacturing output has been relatively small. With over 950 PlayPumps installed across southern Africa, production is stepping up to meet the objectives of the NGO which has its sights firmly set on reaching a target of 4000 pumps by 2010 and serving 10 million people with clean drinking water.

To date, about \$20 million dollars has been raised for the project, but an overall budget of \$60 million is needed to meet the 2010 goals. Over the next three years PlayPumps International plans to reach 10 African countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Zambia.

SYSPRO is very excited to be part of this positive initiative that is achieving much more than just a trickle down effect. Water is providing the foundation for sustainable growth. At PlayPump schools around South Africa, some of the children have even begun growing their own vegetable gardens, proving that access to clean water is the building block for development. ■

# Apollo Health opts for SYSPRO Mobile



**A**pollo Health and Beauty Care, Canada's largest manufacturer of retailer-branded health and beauty care products, has reaped significant benefits from integrating SYSPRO Mobile with its SYSPRO ERP software.

For more than seven years, Apollo Health used an independent warehouse management system (WMS) in conjunction with SYSPRO.

Ed Pelletier, Controller of Apollo Health, says running two pieces of software created problems. "Although the systems were interoperable, the interface was problematic, and there were difficulties working with two separate

sources of data. Once we considered the advantages of SYSPRO Mobile, we decided to eliminate the WMS altogether."

With customers such as Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart and Loblaws, Apollo's product offerings, and particularly its liquid soaps and body washes, are designed to compete equivalently with national brands, but at value cost. Approximately the third-largest business of its kind in North America and an enthusiastic participant in the global market, the company also sends product to Central and South America, Mexico, Europe, and Asia.

Throughout its 14-year history, Apollo has strategically evolved to keep pace with changes in the marketplace. Part of that evolution has involved upgrading the software systems that underlie its accounting, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution processes.

Now equipped with 25 wireless handheld devices, Apollo enjoys real-time, remote access to SYSPRO. From shop floor to warehouses, SYSPRO Mobile allows Apollo to instantly update and control the movement of its inventory and view key management information. Apollo uses a wide range of SYSPRO Mobile's functionalities, including Job Query, Stock Query, Bin Transfer, Stock Adjustments, Sales Order Picking, Stock Take Capture, Purchase Order Receipt, Job Issue, Job Receipt and Warehouse Transfers.

"We were using handhelds before, but they were dumb terminals," Pelletier says. "Now we're using mobile PCs, and our ability to make inquiries and process additional transactions has greatly improved."

According to Steve Loschiavo, Apollo's IT Manager, moving to SYSPRO Mobile has made his job less complicated. "It's simplified my life, largely because it's a single platform, with warehouse management and ERP all on one system," he says.

Implementing SYSPRO posed challenges, but none that weren't overcome. "We were happy with the work that SYSPRO's reseller did for us. For every issue that came up, they found a resolution," Loschiavo says.

"Companies used to traditional WMS systems can be hesitant to make the switch to SYSPRO, because it necessitates a certain amount of re-learning. In my experience, the switch is worth making. For us, SYSPRO Mobile works better than the old system, since it bridges the gap between WMS and ERP."

"SYSPRO ERP, in combination with SYSPRO Mobile, is a robust system that manages to fill 90% of our process needs. SYSPRO is fairly straightforward to learn, doesn't require a team of programmers and consultants to maintain it, and it's given us many of the tools we need to do our jobs," Pelletier says. ■

# Manufacturing on a roll at UCWP



**The UCW Partnership** (UCWP) focuses on the design, manufacture and refurbishment of rolling stock – locomotives and passenger coaches – for southern African and international customers. A joint initiative between Murray & Roberts subsidiary Union Carriage & Wagon and Duda Rail Engineering (a consortium led by the J&J Group), UCWP was formed in 2003 but has been a dominant player in the South African railway industry since 1957.

With more than 13,000 vehicles produced since UCWP's inception, current projects include the design and build of 110 locomotives for the Ermelo/Richards Bay coal line, the design and build of 32 locomotives for the Sishen/Saldanha ore line, 506 10M4S2 passenger and motor coach upgrades, and assembly of the 81 Electrostar vehicles for the Gautrain Rapid Rail Link project. The company's current staff of 600 people and annual revenue exceeding R500 million are both expected to grow significantly in the next few years.

In 2003 UCWP decided to replace its in-house system which was unable to support the business pressures the com-

pany was experiencing. These included shorter time from enquiry to build, the demands of a growing business, and the need for real-time information. The requirement was for a fully integrated system which could be customized to UCWP's particular business needs. In addition, there were unique aspects of the business that could not be accommodated by a standard system, especially the company's core competitive strength – product design and manufacturing.

UCWP's management evaluated a number of ERP solutions based on fit, reliability, accuracy and auditability, with cost being a secondary factor. The shortlisted suppliers were JD Edwards (now part of Oracle), SAP and SYSPRO. UCWP chose SYSPRO and Proactive Integrators to implement the system and develop the manufacturing project management system.

One reason for selecting SYSPRO was that the system's flexibility made customization easier. A key point in the decision to use dealer Proactive Integrators was the company's experience in implementing ERP solutions in complex manufacturing environments, and its ability to provide a fully functional project management sys-

tem that embodied the years of experience UCWP had in manufacturing projects.

The project started in early 2004 with UCWP mapping its process flows. This was followed by detailed documentation of each department's procedures. At this stage, UCWP's departmental heads, the manager responsible for the overall project, and the managing director as executive sponsor were the main members of staff involved.

Using the process documentation, the first phase of the development and implementation went live in June 2005. Such was UCWP's confidence in the implementation and data conversion that the go-live phase was done in one step over a weekend rather than as a gradual process.

Subsequent phases have added to the functionality of the system, but from the outset the key benefit of the system has been the availability of real-time information and reporting. At a glance, management and staff are able to see the operational status and performance of the various parts of the business – a major competitive advantage.

The project manufacturing system developed by Proactive Integrators is also considered a competitive differentiator for UCWP. The system enables the company to manage the process of contract estimation and commercial evaluation so that

it can provide accurate costing, timing and pricing for new contracts.

When a contract is won, more detailed planning is added which allows UCWP to forecast inventory and work requirements, and place future-dated orders with suppliers taking into

account cost escalations. The system then allows management to track the costs and progress of each manufacturing project. The project system is tightly integrated with SYSPRO so that information which is created in one part of the organization is visible to the rest of the company.

The combined SYSPRO and projects system will be a key enabler of the company's planned growth over the next four years. With a number of major contracts due to come on-stream in the next few months, real-time information will be essential for managing this fast-growing business. ■

## Award-winning partnership reaps rewards



**L**ong-running SYSPRO user and K3 Business Technology Group (formerly K3 McGuffie Brunton) customer Ernest H Hill has received a top accolade in the Best of British Manufacturing IT 2007 awards.

The runner up award in the manufacturing/business management category recognizes the specialist pump manufacturer's business successes underpinned by its strategically-designed, totally integrated, fully supported, end-to-end SYSPRO business solution from K3.

Dominic Hewins, Sales Director of Ernest Hill, says: "Our manufacturing is now a manufacturing and logistics operation and is a world away from how we used to operate. More to the point, our customers recognize this. We not only receive daily orders from customers who require us to manufacture and supply direct to their clients anywhere in the world, but a number of customers also ask us to source, stock and distribute parts for them that we do not even make."

The Sheffield-based manufacturer of fluid-handling equipment and K3 have worked together for many years and this relationship has enabled Ernest Hill to develop its business and provide a launch pad for future growth.

K3 provides and supports the smooth running of Ernest Hill's SYSPRO implementation and supplies and manages the company's IT network infrastructure. The company's Manchester offices were also responsible for supplying and supporting the e-commerce customer interface. This completely integrated solution provides the full gamut of features and functions required by Ernest Hill to run a slick operation and maintain excellent levels of customer satisfaction.

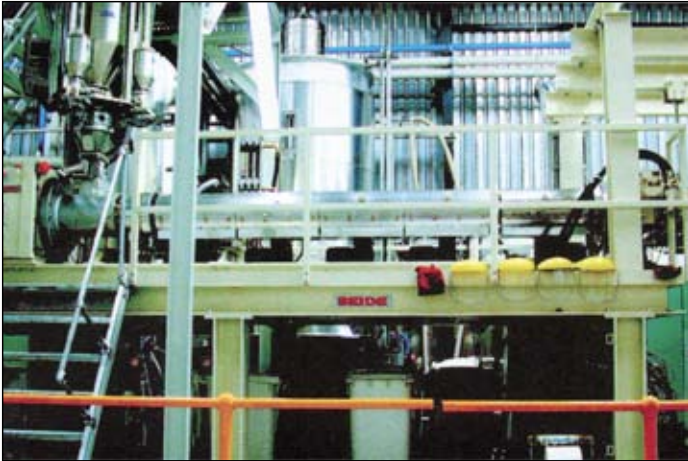
Companies such as Ernest Hill are generally lean and need the support of class-leading IT providers to ensure that all of their systems are fit for purpose, glitch-free and business enhancing. The partnership has

proven both fruitful and exemplary over the years, with Ernest Hill continually developing its business and K3 delivering the IT back up. This arrangement is validated by the Best of British award.

"The thought of managing an IT project can hamper the implementation of technology that could make a significant change to the way SMEs do business, holding them back when they should be moving forward. As demonstrated by this award, K3 provides the key to enabling rapid and smooth delivery of benefit, without the project headaches," said Howard Joseph, Managing Director of K3.

Ernest Hill fully recognizes the strong IT role played by K3. Hewins states: "The high level of service and support that we receive has always been a strong part of K3's offering, and we are very happy with the support we are getting from their staff in Manchester." ■

# SYSPRO user wins best speaker award at SAPICS



**T**he implementation of best practice measures has enabled specialist South African plastics packaging company Thermopac to improve its profitability over the past five years.

That was the high note of a presentation by Alan Booth of Thermopac, who won the Best Speaker Award at this year's SAPICS conference. The Annual SAPICS Conference and Exhibition is the premier educational and networking event in Africa for supply chain and operations management professionals.

In his presentation, Booth emphasized the importance not only of infrastructure and technology, but of people's attitudes and willingness to learn. While this is not a new generation of ideas, the acknowledgement that software alone will not solve a problem was significant for SYSPRO and its users.

Thermopac implemented a system called Visual Performance Measurement which focuses on several critical aspects of best practice: teamwork, focused improvement, effective maintenance, quality assurance and the reduction of set-up time.

In the system, measurements are both visual and performance-oriented. They include loss and waste analysis, an equipment register, maintenance records, quality assurance and measures for work, planning, scheduling and performance. These measures are linked to an awards system to ensure that departments perform optimally.

In such a competitive environment, employees need to understand that quality assurance comes from the source. Customer complaints, for example, are built into the monthly awards system, not to point fingers but to drive improvement. Providing the team members with feedback and awards is a vital part of the

empowerment process as they are given responsibility and accountability for their actions.

Thermopac converted from a home-grown Omnix system to SYSPRO four years ago, when SYSPRO provided the platform to upgrade the entire IT hardware and software infrastructure of the company.

Most importantly, a centralized database was created which enables all production to be scanned into SYSPRO four times a day. The measurement systems draw data out of SYSPRO functions such as inventory and bill of materials.

"SYSPRO gave us the foundation to revolutionize our planning system," Booth said. "Once we had put ERP in place we were able to set up the performance measures. You could not have one without the other. Best practice is a holistic approach." ■





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