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Richard Underwood | Director | Underwood's Steel Stockholders

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Looking for a fresh solution

Director Richard Underwood was prompted to look for new software as his old system lacked the functionality he required, including the facility to email or fax from within the system. Although he had invested in this system only five years previously there had been little or no development to the system during that time.

Richard decided he wanted a new Microsoft Windows-based system and invited demonstrations from three suppliers. He decided that bisTrack was the best in terms of value for money and functionality and, after a couple of site visits to other users, he learnt just how easy it was to use.

bisTrack went live at Underwood’s earlier in 2006 with 26 users including eight at the Fabricating and Timber Joinery department which uses a combination of the system’s Works Orders and Outwork/Third Party Costs to manage its work.

Easy product and customer import

With around 3500 product lines and almost 2000 customers, implementation was a potentially daunting prospect. However, Richard explains, “One great advantage on the product side was that we were able to take on existing product codes, many of which are known by all the users.

“The second advantage was the ‘alpha lookup’ on product descriptions, which is a great help for many of the lesser known products. The transfer of stock and customer data was made easier because we could just transfer it into Excel spread sheets and tidy it up before taking it into bisTrack. We still have some gaps in our data, such as email addresses for some customers, but we are gradually collecting this information.”

Weights and measures Richard continues, “A crucial function for us was bisTrack’s ability to handle weights and keep track of non-standard lengths. Our materials are very heavy and we need precise weights for each piece of steel which comes in or goes out. We also do a lot of cutting to length, drilling and welding.”

More information, better control

From a managerial point of view, Richard says he was pleased at the speed with which the staff took to bisTrack. “Being a Windows system made it easier, and the progression from Counter Sales to Operations made it easy to grasp the basics before getting into the more indepth parts of the system. Now I can also look at which people are doing what and how their sales and margins differ!”

Underwoods

Underwood’s Steel Stockholders

Part of the Underwood’s Group, Underwood’s Steel Stockholders supply a variety of steel and related products for the construction and engineering industries. The company operates out of depots in Worcester and Hereford and offers a full range of cutting services as well as a comprehensive stock range. The Hereford depot also has an ironmongery department selling screws, nuts, bolts and fixtures.



bisTrack | Case Study



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More information, better control cont...

Richard also likes the way bisTrack enables his sales staff to find customer quotes easily and convert them to orders. He says that Purchasing and Works Orders are also quicker and easier to use than the old system and it’s much easier to look at the overall picture in the depot to see what work is outstanding. He concludes, “Within a couple of months of going live on bisTrack we were starting to build up really useful picture from our management information — it’s great to be able to look at data relating to sales and costs more easily and quickly. Now we can check which depots and staff are performing better. I’m more than happy with the day-to-day operation and we’re now looking forward to expanding our use of the system to include recommended stock ordering, back-to-back purchase enquiries and increasing our customer contact data.”

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