

## As easy as 123

*Sometimes an idea comes along that has the potential to transform the status quo. Guy Amoroso believes that his ERP approach fits that description*

In these cash strapped times, manufacturers may well be feeling that they're caught between a rock and a hard place. After several years of putting off that ERP upgrade or replacement project, they know that leaving it any longer may damage their competitiveness – even risk the business – but the economy just isn't stable enough for the board to press the 'go' button. It's all about confidence, cash, courage and second guessing an unforeseeable future.

But none of that need be the case, according to Guy Amoroso, managing director of 123 Insight. For him, the problem lies in the business models of mainstream IT vendors, which, he believes, are stuck in the past – a past when high costs, Herculean effort and IT went hand in glove. Many traditional ERP system developers, he claims, are guilty of charging excessively, often for providing arguably unnecessary ERP set-up services.

*With 123insight, Corintech has halved lead times and driven efficiency into the sales order process*



That's why, says Amoroso, he has spent the last decade building and refining a very different business model and a different ERP system – both founded on simplicity and transparency. The outcome: manufacturers need neither courage nor cash to 'invest' in his new Microsoft .Net-based 123insight ERP system.

What makes the company's approach so compelling is its speed of implementation, transparency and risk-free nature. It starts with an invitation to attend a two-and-a-half hour, no-cost evaluation workshop. If what you see turns out not to float your boat, you walk away. But if it appears to be exactly what you want (and, for 95% of companies, that has been the outcome), manufacturers put their key project team on simplified, intuitive classroom training at £3,000

each for six days, or £500 per day for any subset, depending on competence. Crucially, though, even then you only pay if and when you proceed with the implementation.

"It's no-risk selection: there's no obligation on the training, and the adoption process, too, is no risk," insists Amoroso. "When customers register to use the system, it's just a low monthly fee, without any binding contract. And payments are only ever for licences in use – so during implementation that might only be three." Add to that a remote installation charge of just £250, and the numbers look jaw droppingly modest.

"Some of our customers make the point that, in previous lives, they have spent up to £1 million on an ERP system implementation and got nowhere. Others observe that our monthly rental is less than they would pay for maintenance alone. You just can't go wrong," laughs Amoroso.

Sounds too good to be true? The experience of some 170 manufacturers currently using the system says not so. And, amazingly, 123 Insight has 42 printed case studies – meaning that a staggering one in four has been happy enough to commit the time and effort to a detailed testimonial.

Are there limits to the size and scope of manufacturer that 123insight can support? Amoroso claims not, repeating that this is a modern .Net based application with an SQL database geared to handling large volumes of mission-critical data. "Our system currently supports a £100 million turnover manufacturer and we support start-up ventures, too."

But enough of his views; what do manufacturing users think? Fordingbridge, Hampshire-based Corintech provides a revealing example. Managing director Sean Wigmore explains that the company is an electronic product design and manufacturing subcontractor that had been using an ageing DOS-based system. When sister company Lascar settled on a new solution, he says, Corintech planned to follow suit, once it was up and running.

Sadly, after an expensive failed implementation, both companies decided to look at alternatives. Enter 123insight. "Lascar implemented it successfully, so we started down the same path a year or so later," confirms Wigmore. What did he think of the engagement? "I quite liked the evaluation workshop approach. It was very informal and it was easy for me to slip out of the office for a couple of hours and be back in the afternoon," he answers.

Suitably impressed, the company 'registered' to use 123insight, formed an ERP implementation group and sent four staff on training, with part funding from the government's Manufacturing Advisory Service. Wigmore says

transferring to 123insight was easy. "We spent three days over Christmas transferring the data, came in on the first day back in January, loaded our sales orders back in and went live across all departments."

What of the benefits? Wigmore says they were many and immediate. Most importantly, lead times were halved, with the new system supporting a previously impossible lean review of the sales order process. "We now load [orders] onto 123insight, run MRP, which takes three or four minutes, enact the works order suggestions and then the purchasing team are ready to buy components. For a process that was taking two to three weeks, we now achieve this in less than 24 hours."

The company is also harnessing 123insight's multi-company database structure – sharing manufacturing facilities with Lascar in Hong Kong. And more recently, Corintech also went for 123insight's CRM option, as part of a plan to launch its own standard product range. Wigmore's opinion: "123insight delivered some very good enhancements. We have better connectivity, more licences open to more people and better reporting."

He's not alone. At CSI (Electronic Manufacturing Services) in Witham, Essex, manufacturing director Darren Webb says that his 123insight ERP system is costing just 60% of the previous system's maintenance contract alone. As for ease of implementation, he says data transfer started on Friday 18 June and the company went live at lunchtime the following day.

"We were suddenly able to do much more with our time. We're running at a much greater capacity with the same number of staff, and I would estimate that we could grow the business a further 25% without increasing staff numbers," says Webb. And he adds: "123insight is far superior to any other MRP/ERP system I've used or seen. Had I come across 123insight in my previous role, I would have changed and saved megabucks."

Maybe it's time to rethink your ERP strategy? ■

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### The risk-free approach to ERP/MRP system selection

### All the success - none of the risk.

123insight set out to demystify the process of selecting a business system for manufacturers. First we developed the multiple award-winning 123insight and then we took all of the risk out of the evaluation process and subsequent use. 2½ hour free Evaluation Workshops run throughout the UK every month, make it clear whether 123insight could be for you. If it looks OK, the full 6 days of training in the system (all that's required) is offered without obligation. So if you don't have a comprehensive ERP/MRP business system or are not happy with the one you have, join the many that have gone through the risk-free process and are now benefitting from using 123insight.

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