



Case Study



Surface Technology, a leading supplier of high performance surface coating services, implements a smarter business solution

Background

Surface Technology (part of Norman Hay plc) operates six sites in the UK, as well as sites in Australia and China. The company is successful and profitable; however, intelligence with regards to which parts of the business are most profitable was hard to source.

The challenge

Surface Technology was operating on numerous systems, including spreadsheets that required significant manual data entry and did not integrate well. There was real risk of errors in data-out, and a lack of insight into the production element of the process.

Once a part went in to production, it was difficult to know where in the production process the part was without someone physically checking, which meant providing updates to customers proved onerous.



The senior team identified that there was need for an up to date ERP (Enterprise Resource Platform) system that would save them time and provide them with the business intelligence needed to run the business with more clarity.

Most people within the business had not used a full ERP system before, so a culture change was needed. Approval for the investment was granted by the board, based on efficiency improvements, so it was essential that the new system achieved agreed outcomes.

Implementation

Surface Technology put the work out to tender and, with the help of a consultant, narrowed the field down to three providers. They chose Azzure IT due to the consultancy team grasping the Surface Technology model early on, offering advice and ideas tailored to them rather than a generic out-of-the-box solution. Microsoft Dynamics NAV was the preferred solution due to its ease of use and cost, along with the integration with Microsoft Office.

The cloud-based option was chosen due to the company operating across various sites. In addition to Microsoft Dynamics NAV, the team bought Jet Enterprise Reports as an add-on, enabling them to pull live data straight out of NAV into management documents. The system is now live on their Leeds site, and the plan is to roll it out to their East Kilbride site soon. Following this the business may then look to roll it out across other sites within the Surface Technology business.



The phased approach will also see new additions to how the system is used, including the introduction of a shop floor data capture system and a Jet tool to enable more accurate quoting based on live labour rates and costs of materials.

Key Benefits

The system implementation is still at an early stage but the benefits are already starting to impress, particularly in relation to time saved and more accurate business information. Just one example is the time saved on producing labour journals, which is now down to 30 secs from 10-15 minutes using their previous system.

By getting these journals on quicker it has allowed the management accounts to be completed and issued to the parent company far quicker than the old system would have allowed.

Warran Clark, financial controller at Surface Technology, explains: "There can be up to 20+ journals that need posting each month, which could take a good few hours to complete using the old system. With the new system, the posting of all journals takes no more than 10 minutes. This is just one example of many efficiencies the NAV system has given us".

Graham Rackstraw, Operations Director, added: "We are already starting to see efficiencies and as we become more familiar with the system and introduce additional elements, we are expecting to see a lot more. I'm confident that the increased amount of accurate, real-time information we can now access will allow us to become much more competitive.



“Azzure IT has proved an excellent choice for this project. Not only has the team been highly supportive and in constant contact, they have also invested the time in getting to know our business really well. This has meant they have been able to positively challenge us on what we required and make recommendations regards business process improvements”.

Craig Such, MD at Azzure IT, said: “The work with Surface Technology is a superb example of how transformational Microsoft Dynamics NAV can be for service-based manufacturers. Whilst many ERP systems for manufacturing are based around end products being created, the versatility of NAV is ideal for companies like Surface Technology, which operates as part of the supply chain within the manufacturing process. “We are looking forward to working closely with the team to implement the system across their other sites and further enhance the capability of the system with more add-ons.”

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Azzure IT is a leading Microsoft Dynamics provider - the UK’s leading Microsoft ‘Gold Partner’, a Deloitte Fast50 UK (Fastest Growing Tech Company 2016) and Microsoft ‘President’s Club’ member, 2016. The company sells and deploys Microsoft business software solutions. The software can run a business end-to-end – from initial inquiry, sales, resource planning, distribution, customer service, project management, financial management and more.

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