

Power Panels: Lean, mean and delivering added value to customers

Expert recommendation

“Our business reached the point where we recognised the need for a new enterprise IT system - one that offered the increased functionality and scalability that our continuing growth demanded. We consulted our advisors and, on their recommendations, looked at a number of different products before deciding on Navision.

Acora was recommended to us as a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner for Navision, with particular experience in the manufacturing sector. It has been a refreshing experience to work with an IT supplier with such good manufacturing expertise and an approach to partnership similar to our own.”

Walsall-based Power Panels Electrical Systems Ltd. is an ISO9001 world-class manufacturer of cable harnesses, drag chain assemblies, electrical and electronic assemblies. They came to us as a company enjoying success and growth even as many manufacturers around them were disappearing to low cost economies. Instead, Power Panels responded to this trend by focusing its activities on developing business in world-wide markets where it could for-see long-term growth and where quality and added value were more important than price alone.

Today, it boasts customers in Europe, North America and the Far East, expanding into sectors such as Electronic printing, Ink Jet Printing, CNC and Automated Machinery; weighing, packing, labelling and scientific and materials handling.

Business focus

Stable customer partnerships are key to Power Panels’ success; once engaged, Power Panels will only deal with a single OEM customer in any one particular market sector, meaning consistent delivery and exceptional performance are non-negotiable. “As we will be our customers’ exclusive supplier of major electrical assemblies, we have a responsibility to make sure that we deliver the correct product at the correct time,” commented Ian Knight, Power Panel’s special projects manager. “This means that our business has to be a lean, highly efficient and cost effective operation’.

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Shaping our services around you

Following its appointment Acora resolved the difficulties Power Panels had initially experienced with its Navision installation and, in mid-2004, upgraded the system to version 3.7.

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At this time Acora worked closely with Power Panels on a project to integrate externally sourced Kanban-managed inventory onto the Navision system. This involved the introduction of bar coding technology as a solution to

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automate what had, up to that time, been a time consuming, manually managed process. "Our Kanban system contains approximately 1400 part numbers covering both materials and components," Ian Knight observed, "and now with Navision and bar coding, it's far easier to smoothly and efficiently manage the replenishment process for those Kanban items that are externally sourced. This whole exercise clearly demonstrated the excellent adaptability of the Navision product and the manufacturing skills of Acora."

Focused on outcomes

For Ian Knight, the project was a significant step forward. "There's no doubt that the Navision and bar coding project has delivered real operational benefits. It has helped us sweat greater efficiency benefits from our Kanban system and has helped us to further reduce inventory holding costs. The assistance we received from Acora was first class. They expertly utilised Microsoft methodology to accurately assess our needs and then successfully managed the project through to its

conclusion. They did what they said they'd do and they understood the nuances of manufacturing and the imperative for us to reduce costs whilst maintaining our customer service levels."

Alongside the Kanban system enhancements, Navision also began to shine at a later stage in the commercial transaction, helping systems to reconcile and streamline the accounts payable procedure, delivering additional business efficiency benefits; in addition, the prompt settlement of accounts continues to assist Power Panels in the development of mutually profitable, long term supplier relationships.

"In the year 2004/5 Power Panels won the accolade of 'Manufacturing Business of the Year', in the Best of the Black Country Awards. Everyone at the company is, of course, immensely proud of this and the Navision system certainly played its part in the achievement. Now we're looking forward to winning more customers and awards and we know we can rely on Acora to be there to support us."

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Further information



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