

## SAP Customer Success Story Mid-Market Solutions



**Fastbolt, with companies in the UK and Germany, is a leading European manufacturer, stockist and supplier of industrial fasteners, with UK and European market leadership in a number of product categories.**

**itelligence**



## **FASTBOLT**

### **HOW SAP AND ITelligence HELPED FASTBOLT TO INTEGRATE TWO SEPARATE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS INTO ONE**

To ensure they never compete with their customers, Fastbolt has a strict policy of dealing only with distributors. As a critical element of customer supply chains, Fastbolt is committed to providing the greatest possible flexibility and efficiency in meeting order and pricing requirements.

Historically, the company has run two entirely discrete business systems across its two European sites. This situation has now changed, however, with the implementation in 2000 of an integrated ERP solution from SAP across the enterprise. This has given the company new levels of commercial flexibility through its improved ability to view data from all areas of the business and access better and more detailed information for enhanced forward planning.

Following implementation, the company reports multiple new efficiencies from achieving full visibility across all areas, enabling enhanced and streamlined stock planning, improved responsiveness to customer demands, better forward planning and a more effective response to new opportunities.

When Fastbolt first started to consider implementing an ERP solution within its business, the most critical primary decision was its choice of supplier. SAP was a name that the Fastbolt team was aware of but, as the company's UK Managing Director, Graham Joyce comments, "If we had a preconception, it was that SAP is expensive and that it is most appropriate for use by large multinational corporations. We employ a total of 70 people across both our sites, but at the demonstration of the solutions capabilities we quickly realised that its modularity and scalability made it a worthy contender for our attention."

"The clincher was our own strategy behind this implementation. We were not looking for a quick fix. We were working to a five-year plan and beyond, and required a solution that we could afford initially and then scale up in line with our needs. This is what SAP offered us with its solutions for businesses like us, seeking new levels of efficiency and productivity across the organisation."

For its hardware platform Fastbolt chose Compaq, now part of HP. As Graham Joyce explains "Compaq was chosen as we knew that they would provide us with a reliable and stable solution that would ensure continuous service across our international company site. They not only supplied us with a solid basis for our initial implementation of SAP but provided us with a solution that has the flexibility to respond to the future growth and development of our business."

#### **ACCELERATED ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Fastbolt selected SAP Value Added Reseller itelligence to manage the development, installation and implementation process. According to Joyce, "Since we are split across two countries, the location of our partner was very important to us. As well as satisfying us that they were fully capable of delivering everything

we needed, they operate in the UK and Germany and could therefore cover the implementation at both sites."

For Fastbolt, the most important functionality of the new solution related to Finance and Purchasing. Among the six modules it selected for initial implementation is Finance, which supports general ledger, accounts receivable and accounts payable. The Materials Management module,

meanwhile, supports purchasing alongside inventory and warehouse management, forecasting and materials requirements planning.

The other modules for initial implementation were Sales and Distribution, Production

Planning and Controlling, where cost and revenue information is collected and analysed to support the business, management and operational functions served by the other modules. These combine to give Fastbolt all the functionality required to streamline and integrate its operational and management processes. "All these modules are compatible with other software applications within our business, so our ability to access information from any area or department has been greatly accelerated," added Joyce. "We now have the opportunity to develop the solution further in the future without major investments of money or time."

#### **BUSINESS SOLUTION INTEGRATION**

The itelligence, SAP and Fastbolt implementation team's main remit was to combine the two separate business solutions into one within a time scale set by the commercial priorities of the business. The process was based on a tried and tested methodology that identified all the core customisation requirements for the SAP application, to ensure that any advantages of the previous systems were replicated and their weaknesses eradicated.

**"It's an important advantage of the SAP solution that development, installation and implementation can be adapted without undue stress to the particular needs of most organisations, regardless of size."**

Following initial customisation, key users conducted a detailed testing exercise that revealed any requirements for further customising. The project team intensively tested the full end-to-end business processes, prior to an end-user training programme covering all process and data migration needs.

"While we base the implementation on a proven methodology, every client need is different," says Steve Barker, Managing Director of itelligence Business Solutions (UK) Ltd. "Just as we may need to customise the application itself, our approach too has to be flexible. It's an important advantage of the SAP solution that development, installation and implementation can be adapted without undue stress to the particular needs of most organisations, regardless of size."

#### **IMPLEMENTATION ADVANTAGES**

Following the implementation of the SAP solution, it did not take long for its advantages to become apparent. "All areas of the business are visible to us now, across sites and departments, giving us a far more accurate and integrated view of where we are at any point in time," comments Joyce. "Information flows are now much faster and more complete. This means our reporting is much more detailed, providing a radically improved base for forward planning. Today, we work on carefully assessed and interrogated information, not assumptions. It also enables us to identify and act on new opportunities much faster than in the past."

Important advances have also been achieved in the company's customer service levels. As Richard Blythe, UK Sales Director says, "As an example, we can now offer our customers bespoke stock management orders and pricing methods. We can now cater for the different day-to-day ordering patterns in the UK and Germany, leading to better overall service levels. As far as we are concerned, these are important new developments that will help us maintain and further grow our market-leadership, by building better customer relationships."

In addition, the automation of Fastbolt's Material Requirements Planning (MRP) process has revolutionised the company's ability to view its stock levels in real time, improving stock availability for streamlined fulfilment. This has also enabled cost-cutting through the reductions it facilitates in the stock levels Fastbolt holds.

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Fastbolt is committed to constant development of the system, and possible future plans include the introduction of EDI, barcoding in the warehouse and a full upgrade of the solution when commercial needs demand it.

In the meantime, the positive impact of the SAP solution has been highly beneficial for the business. "Our view of SAP has changed significantly," says Fastbolt's UK Managing Director. "We are living proof that it can bring multiple efficiency gains to just about any size of business."

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