

CASE STUDY

CLIENT:	DDK Commercial Interiors
INDUSTRY:	Manufacturers
LOCATION:	Australia
PRODUCT SUITE:	EXO Business
MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER:	Oxygen Express

Melbourne-based commercial interiors business DDK finds a way to move from assumptions about sales – to a position of absolute certainty.

Overview

Set up in 1974, Melbourne-based DDK is now one of Australia's leading designers, manufacturers and distributors of office furniture.

The company has a range of established brands, as well as custom designed products. But what they pride themselves on, above all else, is commitment to customer service.

Lately however, a lack of visibility on their products and stock levels threatened to put that special relationship with customers in jeopardy.

Out with the old...

DDK had been using a DOS-based program for their general ledger and stock keeping. As to be expected with DOS, it was old and antiquated. But it was unreliable too.

"We couldn't really use it to report on the business in any meaningful way," says Steven Gilming, General Manager at DDK.

So DDK started looking at possible replacements.

They considered several systems, including a Windows based version of Business Manager, but weren't convinced by any of them. Then they stumbled across MYOB's EXO.

"Spec for spec with the other systems, EXO was a strong contender," says Gilming – "but it was only

after meeting with EXO-specialists Oxygen Express that we knew we had the right system in our hands".

DDK was looking for three things in particular: reliability, flexibility and reporting capability. According to Gilming, EXO had all three.

Scoping requirements through dialogue

To be certain they fully understood DDK's business process and requirements, Oxygen Express started the implementation process with an in depth consultation.

"It was a very fluid process," says Gilming, "batting ideas back and forth to make sure the system perfectly matched what we needed".

There were certain tweaks that needed to be made, particularly around DDK's specific job flow.

"The way our invoices are generated and our orders are fulfilled doesn't fit a standard out of the box-type solution," says Gilming.

DDK uses a unique proprietary system that kick starts the manufacturing process on a piece of custom furniture the moment a sales order is received. The same system allows customers to track

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the progress of their orders and view production and delivery dates.

It is critical to DDK's workflow, as well as their customer service – so it needed to fit seamlessly with the data in EXO. Oxygen Express, through a combination of standard EXO functionality and custom reports, made that happen.

This was just one of many areas where Oxygen Express went “above and beyond” to ensure DDK's needs were met, according to Gilming.

“What impressed us most about Oxygen was their responsiveness to any issue we raised. It didn't matter which member of staff was responsible. As a team, they made sure they took ownership and saw each job through to completion,” he says.

Old habits die hard

DDK were impressed with Oxygen Express' approach to training too.

“Instead of applying a blanket approach to every one of us, they took the time to tailor training sessions according to the needs of each user.

“It sounds complicated, but actually it makes a lot of sense. Only very few of us need to know how the system works in its entirety. For the rest, a basic knowledge in one or two relevant sections is enough,” says Gilming.

Despite the training however, not everyone took to EXO straight away.

“I guess if you're only used to the basic layout of a DOS screen,” says Gilming, “the leap from there to a Windows-based system is quite a big one”.

“Not that EXO is particularly complicated to get to grips with,” he adds – “it just makes you more aware of the steps involved in certain procedures. If you're not used to all that, it can be a bit much to take in at once”.

A few months down the line, staff are happy. Nowadays, if anything unusual crops up, DDK has a well-established system in place to ensure the issue is resolved quickly in house, or escalated to Oxygen Express.

Knowing what's profitable and what's not

With EXO up and running, by far and away the biggest improvement – as far as DDK is concerned – is increased visibility.

“Now we've got the ability to compare, we understand our products like never before,” says Gilming.

“At the touch of a button, we can see which ones are profitable and which aren't. And because we have clear intelligence, we know where to make adjustments to improve overall sales.

“We also have much better visibility over our stock,” he says.

With a large range of products and warehouses in Victoria and New South Wales, DDK struggled to keep an accurate track of stock, especially using their old DOS system. With no clear view of orders, it was tricky to establish precisely which products to order in – and when.

“With EXO, we've been able to move away from the assumption that a particular product sells well,” says Gilming, “to a position of absolute certainty”.

Identifying trends

What drives this visibility is the ability in EXO to customise reports on almost any aspect of the business.

“You could use EXO straight out the box if you wanted,” says Gilming, “but you'd really only be scratching the surface of what's possible”.

“Thanks to the expertise of Oxygen Express, every single one of our screens has been tailored to our business. We can create reports detailing exactly what any of our high level managers want to see – at any point in time. And we can break down menus to suit any department.

Combine that level of visibility with user-specific access and you've got a system that can be used by anyone in the business. By giving managers direct visibility over their particular area, they're empowered to make better decisions at a departmental level – and that has benefits across the board.

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It also means higher level managers can begin to view their business in terms of a number of different profit centres, and allocate resources and assistance where it's needed most.

"Our previous system had no customisation capabilities. There were no levels of access either, which meant only people authorised to view sensitive data could use it. EXO couldn't be more different," says Gilming.

"We've now got reliable, accurate information across the entire business – and the importance of that really cannot be underestimated."

Client and Enterprise partner details

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