CASE STUDY

CLIENT:	Offroad Trucks Australia
INDUSTRY:	Wholesaling
LOCATION:	Australia
PRODUCT SUITE:	EXO Business
MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER:	Horizon Business Systems

Off-road vehicle importer tackles the obstacles of manual back office and warehouse management head on.

Overview

With independent suspension and swinging arms on every axle, Tatra trucks are built to keep going long after most vehicles have turned back. They're so tough in fact, that in their class, they've won six of the last 20 Dakar rallies.

Manufactured in the Czech Republic, Tatra trucks were first imported by Australian company Offroad Trucks Australia in 2003.

Since then, they've been put to use by some of our biggest drilling, logging and engineering operations – companies like Boart Longyear and BMA. And Offroad Trucks has established itself as the sole importer, parts stockist and distributor of Tatra vehicles in Australia.

Six months ago however, in light of strong growth, the company was forced to re-evaluate its job ordering and warehousing systems – and streamline its processes.

The lay of the land back then

For a number of years, Offroad Trucks had used MYOB Premier for general accounting and basic stock keeping. And according to Amber Gaden, Admin Manager, it was a great product – especially for a small company.

But as stock expanded, they realised they needed something that could handle barcoding, forecasting and job costing. Something that could tell if a product was in the warehouse – even if it wasn't technically on the shelf yet.

Gaden says they also needed to keep a better record of sales.

"We had a paper-based system in place. And because we were starting to stock a lot of spare parts, tracking sales manually was becoming very labour-intensive.

"In the end, we just outgrew Premier," she says.

So they decided to look for a replacement system.

Choosing a new path

Offroad Trucks struggled initially to find anything that would do the job properly.

According to Gaden, not only were most of the packages too complicated. Many of them couldn't even get the basics right.

With over 5,000 parts in stock, Offroad Trucks wanted an easy way of locating items. Yet several of the systems they looked at would only allow them to search by part number.

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"Half the time, we don't even know what that number is," says Gaden. "We just wanted to be able to type in 'wheel' or 'steering column' and be presented with a list of possibilities.

"Given the price tags on some of these systems, we were surprised not to be able to do that."

Then all of a sudden they stumbled across a system that seemed to tick all the boxes. Windows based, it was user friendly and could be customised. And according to Gaden, it fitted the bill perfectly.

On board with MYOB EXO

The system was MYOB's EXO, which - at first glance, "just seemed much more user friendly than the other systems we'd been looking at. But it also handled stock in a fantastic way," says Gaden.

"It was able to do payroll, accounts and forecasting, which is what we wanted - a single program that could handle all facets of the business. We didn't want to be manually importing data from other systems," she says.

On the advice of a customer in Karratha, Offroad Trucks approached Perth-based Horizon Business Systems to discuss implementation.

"Though we liked the look of EXO, we didn't know in practice whether it was a viable fit. It wasn't until meeting with Horizon that we were really sold."

According to Gaden, Horizon spent hours discussing Offroad Trucks' business – trying to get an idea of their processes.

"Only once they'd gathered enough intelligence on the nuts and bolts of our operation did they start thinking about customising EXO to our specific requirements."

Ironing out the specifics

There were a number of areas where Offroad Trucks needed specific functionality.

In particular, they wanted to be able to:

- look up back ordered items at any point and see what was still outstanding

- place and receive orders in foreign currencies

- keep track of stock that was en-route – not just 'in the factory' or 'in the warehouse'

- record all work against a specific vehicle – not just a job number

- create simple, visual reports and graphs displaying sales by month, customer or any other number of variables.

Gaden says several of these areas took longer to refine than others. But throughout, the team at Horizon remained patient and helpful.

Now six months down the line, she believes they've pretty much ironed out all the major issues.

"We didn't get to grips with things as quickly as we could have in the weeks immediately following launch," Gaden says.

"General ledger caused some head scratching – and we took a while to understand where the costs of sales were being pulled from. But we were perhaps a little over-eager to get going."

"Given the scale of the job," she adds, "and the inevitable learning curve that accompanies any new piece of software, the installation really was a success."

Keeping an eye on the business

When asked about the improvements MYOB EXO has brought to the business, Gaden is quick to cite the reports.

"Having instant access to our balance sheet or information on aged creditors and debtors makes it much easier to make informed decisions. And because MYOB EXO delivers a lot of the information in a graphical format, it's possible to grab a snapshot of sales by month or customer without getting too bogged down in figures."

Spare parts reports are much more thorough than before too. Gaden says they can pre-order now with a lot more accuracy.

Another area of improvement is the ability to know the status of each job as it progresses.

According to Gaden, Offroad Trucks had previously little way of knowing what stage a job was at once it had started – short of going down to the shop floor and asking the engineer responsible.

"We now record jobs at each stage of their completion, which gives us a much more accurate picture of progress – and costs."

Processes exposed

Above all, says Gaden, everyone is accountable.

"Instead of our workshop manager keeping everything in his head, we can see exactly what's going on on screen. And that means we can pester him – or anyone else – if we need to."

"When you're ordering thousands of different parts and handling hundreds of jobs at once, that transparency of process is essential," Gaden adds.

"And that's what MYOB EXO gives us."

Client and Enterprise partner details

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