

CASE STUDY

CLIENT:	Ullrich Aluminium
INDUSTRY:	Wholesaling
LOCATION:	New Zealand
PRODUCT SUITE:	EXO Employer Services
MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER:	Enprise Solutions

Overview

Sophisticated business software systems for large businesses cost millions, require major business process re-engineering by an army of 'big five' consultants, and can only be implemented over a lengthy time period with much pain and suffering throughout the business.

True? Certainly not for Ullrich Aluminium.

Ullrich went shopping

Over that 25 years, Ullrich has grown strongly, the product range exploded, and branches and distribution centres proliferated. More than 14,000 aluminium products and fastenings are distributed, ranging from aluminium ladders to bridges – with exports commanding a rapidly growing share of annual production. To service this dynamic and diverse business a relatively complex distribution model has evolved, with manufacturing both to order, for kitsets, and for ex-inventory sales both to the trade and directly through retail branches. All branches are distribution centres with attendant inventory management issues. So to cater for this growth Wayne Curran went shopping for a replacement system. He had a clear idea of what needed to get done, and what type of company Ullrich wanted to do business with, but a less clear idea of what could be delivered for an affordable price.

Curran says that while the company wanted a new system, which had to have a high degree of capability, they particularly didn't want complexity. And they certainly didn't want to have to drastically change their business and processes to fit a software solution.

Ease and simplicity

"Ease of use and simplicity were very important to us – because that's vital to our personnel and end users," he says.

"At the same time, we wanted to manage and run our business from a customer perspective. People talk about CRM. To us that's just another buzzword like ERP. What we wanted was to maximise all key information in the context of an individual customer – encompassing their history, their current orders, their invoices, their contracts and pricing and discount structure – all in the same place, and available at our fingertips to people at all levels of our organisation."

Competent MYOB Enterprise Business Partners

Curran says an evaluation team was pulled together and went through an extensive evaluation process, looking at both software applications as well as the companies supporting those applications.

"We looked at three companies. MYOB EXO (formally MYOB Exonet) together with an implementation partner called Enprise, had the most compelling mix of experience, capability and simplicity. It wasn't just a cost decision in the end – although that came into consideration – it was about the best fit of people and technology to what we wanted to achieve in our business."

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Enprise Solutions' sales and marketing director Leanne Graham says the Ullrich implementation has been extremely smooth, with highly competent project management from the Ullrich Team easing what could have been a very tough technical challenge.

"The new system is working the way we hoped it would. The old system had been around for so long that it was like part of the furniture. We took so much for granted that we didn't really appreciate how much it was holding us back" Ullrich Aluminium project coordinator, Margaret Cleal.

Working closely together

"The Ullrich Aluminium project coordinator, Margaret Cleal, worked as part of a team alongside our own project managers. We did a detailed scope and systems analysis to agree the specifications and functionality of the new system. We assisted their project management team audit, review and reengineer processes and procedures to make sure that new software would work the way people within the company wanted.

The agreed scope called for a centralised database, automated sales order processing (replacing straight invoicing), real time reporting on sales analysis, order analysis, and bringing the branches online into a single user environment. The internet hosted application would optimise stock levels across the branches, creating in effect a single inventory easily accessible by all branches, irrespective of the geographical location.

Using the MYOB EXO point of sale module, the manual system was to be automated and fully integrated with financials and distribution. This meant a transaction need only be entered once, instead of the double and even triple handling of orders, invoices and receipts. A major improvement.

Implementation better than expected

The implementation – completed in May 2003 – went "better than planned". Ullrich project coordinator Margaret Cleal says the new system went live with few problems. Inevitably there were issues, but these were handled quickly by the team. The support we have had from Janet, Leanne and all the Enprise staff has helped alleviate the stress we expected.

Exonet delivered business benefits from day one

"Moving from the old system to the new MYOB EXO system has been a giant leap, but it's been achieved without major disruption to the business. In fact quite the reverse. Right from day one, I've had favourable comments from users, some of whom found the old system hard to use.

The benefits for Ullrich are mainly around, Improved profitability and customer relationships, tighter stock management across all branches and more accurate forecasting of demand. Margaret Cleal says "The other major benefit we're noticing so far is around how much faster and easier it is for people to get the information they need to service customers. Customer service is much improved. If the customer wants to know what they bought last week. It's there. From point of sale, our full inventory is visible on the system. We can now commission manufacturing products, or coordinate ex-inventory supply. It's easy to place the order, track delivery and produce invoices.

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Client and Enterprise partner details

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