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EMDA Helps Navico Power Along With Infor ERP SyteLine

Nautical electronics supplier Navico is boosting its global ERP capabilities with Infor's versatile SyteLine solution, and expert assistance from business partner EMDA...

When Navico, the world's largest supplier of electronics for recreational boats, purchased the marine division of Kiwi success story Navman from Brunswick in 2007, they got more than just one of the world's most respected marine electronics brands as part of the deal.

They also inherited a well-oiled ERP (enterprise resource planning) solution based on Infor ERP SyteLine and a team of experienced IT professionals, both in-house and from EMDA Ltd, the New Zealand-based ERP and business solution providers. And because the Norwegian management team at Navico could recognise a winning combination when they saw one, Navico is now in the process of rolling out the Infor ERP SyteLine model, developed by the Navico team in Northcote, across their global enterprise.

Navico Auckland began life as Talon Technology, a start-up founded by Kiwis Peter Maire and Lionel Rogers in 1987. Rebranded 'Navman' in 2001, the company was sold to Brunswick, a New York Stock Exchange-listed manufacturer of marine and recreation equipment, in 2005. Last year, in February, the marine division of Navman was divested from Brunswick and sold to Norwegian-based Navico.

Growth And Change

"By 2005 we had been doubling in size every year,"

says Alan Henderson, IT manager at Navico Auckland.

"We were long-time users of SyteLine, an ERP solution originally developed by Symix. We liked SyteLine because it was a powerful solution and could support our operations here in New Zealand as well as China, Singapore, the UK and elsewhere. And the technical and logistical support we were receiving from EMDA was fantastic."

In 2005 two events occurred that would affect this arrangement. SyteLine was acquired by software giant Infor and the SyteLine solution would be 'enriched, extended and evolved' and integrated into the Infor family of business solutions. And secondly Navman was sold to Brunswick. "It was a pivotal year for us," continues Henderson.

"The acquisition of SyteLine by Infor meant that they would be seriously upgrading the solution and giving us more tools than ever before. And the acquisition of Navman by Brunswick meant that we would need all of them."

Henderson, the IT team from Navman and their technology partner EMDA were up for the challenge.

"SyteLine was always an excellent solution," says Mark Erikson, business consultant at EMDA, "but, with the added functionality that started to come out with the Infor influence, it really matured into an extraordinarily useful solution. For instance, we were able to add

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Jun Juezan
ERP business analyst

complementary Infor solutions, like Field Service Plus (FS+) that extends real-time visibility and additional functionality to field service personnel.”

Just when things were settling down and the team was sorting out all the issues associated with expanding the Navman brand around the world, Brunswick announced that it would be spinning off Navman’s marine electronics division and selling it to Norwegian-based Navico.

“As luck would have it,” continues Erikson, “Navico had been investigating implementing a comprehensive ERP strategy for their global operations and were still in the ‘consultation’ stage. So we showed them how we were running things in Asia/Pacific and they were impressed. To make a long story short, we are now in the process of helping the head office team roll out Infor ERP SyteLine – and the business models developed here – around the globe.”

The global roll out will see Infor ERP SyteLine installed at two more global distribution centres – Tulsa, Oklahoma and The Netherlands (currently Sydney and Auckland); and two more manufacturing facilities – Ensenada, Mexico and England (currently Auckland). Infor ERP Syteline will also support headquarters in Norway as well as the R&D centre in Auckland. The product supports multi-currency transactions and is multilingual so is ideally placed for international deployments.

But while the current model is being replicated elsewhere, Henderson and his team are continually upgrading and enhancing the solution. “Right now we’re on SyteLine version 8.0010,” he says, “and looking forward to seeing a raft of new capabilities – including more of a focus on SOA (service orientated architecture) as new versions are released.”

Real Benefits

One area where Infor ERP SyteLine has made a huge impact is in the Auckland warehouse.

“This is where the flexibility of SyteLine has really made a difference,” says Jun Juezan, ERP Business Analyst at Navico Auckland.

“We now use SyteLine as the backend to our barcode scanning operation. In the past, we had barcode scanners but they were not really interactive. The warehouse staff would go out to fill an order, scan the barcode on the product and then, later, upload the data into the system back in the warehouse office. It was slow and inefficient. But now, with wireless-enabled barcode scanners, we have a direct, real-time link between the warehouse and the main database. In fact, we have even ported SyteLine directly onto the barcode scanners

themselves so that staff can actually see the information on the scanner’s LCD screen as they are fulfilling the order. Not only has this increased the accuracy of the whole warehouse and inventory process but has allowed us to redeploy four out of six warehouse staff to other areas without any decrease in productivity. With a focus on cutting costs and reducing overheads, this is a significant saving.”

Similar savings are being made in the service sector. “One of the benefits from the acquisition of SyteLine by Infor is that it has allowed us to add more functionality in the form of modules,” explains Juezan.


“For instance, we have increased the efficiency of our service desk by 70 percent by implementing Infor Field Service Plus (FS+). FS+ has given the services team a direct view into customer history, inventory levels and status of orders. As a result, they can track any returns quickly and easily. But it doesn’t stop there. Because inventory – including spare parts - is now tightly controlled, we can track where the returned units are and what repairs have been done. While this might not seem to be a major cost saving, it has made a huge difference as we can now re-use perfectly good parts on other units. Just having visibility of all of the different aspects of the business is a major benefit of our SyteLine operation.”

Henderson is especially happy with the ‘Event Management’ capabilities in the most recent releases of Infor ERP SyteLine.

“In the past, every time we made a change in the software – such as adding new routines or expanding the database, we had to manually update all of the processes that were impacted,” he explains.

“But with the Event Management feature, the software proactively detects conditional change anywhere in the supply chain and communicates it instantly to those – both inside and outside the organisation – who need to take action. Problem resolution can take place on the spot following our business rules. This one feature alone has been most helpful as we roll out Infor ERP SyteLine across different geographies with various special requirements.”

The team from EMDA has been instrumental in the success of the global SyteLine roll-out.

“They are our partners in every sense of the word,” concludes Henderson. “If we have a big project and are over-stretched, they are available immediately. They know our business, our data and business processes and how we like to operate. With Infor ERP SyteLine and the team from EMDA, we have all the components in place to support our business 100 percent – here and around the world.” 



> Navico



Business Objective

> Roll out of a comprehensive ERP solution to support the business’s global nautical electronics manufacturing and supply operations.

Solution

> Infor ERP SyteLine deployed with NZ-based ERP and business solutions provider EMDA.

Business Benefits

> Increased warehouse accuracy, service sector savings, and enhanced supply chain efficiencies and problem resolution.



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