



SHUTTLEWORTH MIS BOOSTS UK LABEL PRINTERS PROFITS

UK label printer Label Apeel has installed a Shuttleworth MIS with CRM (customer relationship management) software as part of a £750,000 company wide investment program which has included an 8-colour MPS EF300 press.

Part of the company's overall strategy for the year has been to implement a Lean Manufacturing program to help turn the business around and focus on developing additional customer relationships.

Label Apeel's managing director Stuart Kellock says that this strategy has thus far proved successful and that turnover has improved by 10 per cent, putting profits into double figures.

"Two years ago things were pretty tough, and in hindsight that was a good thing. It meant that we were forced to take an overall look at the business; at what we produced and who we sold to," Mr. Kellock explains.

The turnaround involved a combination of investment in new machinery, a critical analysis of customer profiles, and the implementation of a Lean manufacturing program supported by the new Shuttleworth MIS system.

Today the £3.2M family-run company employs 44 people working across two shifts and offers a consultative approach to its customers' labelling needs and providing a comprehensive service from artwork to completion. The company manufactures both plain and printed self-adhesive labels and swing tickets for a broad client base and a wide range of applications.

Mr. Kellock came down in favour of the Shuttleworth offering because he felt that the company's MIS and its levels of customer support had more than exceeded his expectations.

"Shuttleworth was able to clearly demonstrate that it really did understand our business and our core values," he

says. "During the evaluation process they (Shuttleworth) provided very satisfactory answers to all of our questions and delivered practical solutions to our needs, wants and aspirations. They really did help to guide us every step of the way."

Mr. Kellock believes that it was Shuttleworth's engagement of his company's staff during the MIS implementation process that was responsible for bringing about a more flexible approach to later problem solving and subsequently helped the company to change the way in which it thinks about how it runs its business.

"This really paid off for us because the process helped our staff to engage with the MIS and they were able to specify just exactly what they wanted the MIS to do for them. Since installing the system we have been able to evaluate our business model and strategise much more, and this has helped to make specific areas of our business much more profitable. We are also



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working more efficiently as a team and have identified and increased levels of business from several product lines that had been under performing but have now become much more profitable," he says.

The Shuttleworth MIS system has also proved itself to be a critical element in implementing a Lean manufacturing program. "To implement Lean Manufacturing you have to be able to measure and report. The Shuttleworth system helps to keep control of finished stock. We can identify stock which never moves, so we save on storage space and this has a big impact on cash flow. Before, we had stock which hadn't moved for six months and we didn't know about it! The system also helps us to manage our customers' stock more efficiently and balance lower costs for us in producing longer runs against the cost of holding stock," he says.

Ambitious goals have now been set by Mr. Kellock. "With the controls that we now have, we would like to get to the point where finished stock is a thing of the past - where make ready is so fast, we don't need stock. Our customers are in the food and retail sectors, where turnaround time of three days is normal but is not fast enough for most people. One recent job for 300,000 labels went through from order to finished goods in just five hours - so there is no

reason why we can't we get every job through in the same way."

Mr. Kellock estimates that the combination of the Lean program and the MIS has saved the company £20,000 last year alone, and this is expected to rise to £30,000 in year three of the project. A significant result of implementing the Shuttleworth MIS has been to cut manual intervention and allowed repetitive tasks to be automated, freeing up staff for more productive work and helping shift the company's focus to customer relations management (CRM).

"The CRM was the tool that we really needed. It means we can move people from raising estimates to doing something more important in customer relations management. CRM is today not just for the sales team, but for the whole company. This business is all about relationships - of our top ten customers, eight have been here for five years. The Shuttleworth MIS is really helping us to monitor and make inroads into improving the overall business as well as our cash flow - which for me is the tangible proof that the MIS is working for us," concludes Mr. Kellock.

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Managing Director, Label Apeel

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