



WEBER MAKES ITS MARK WITH MIS

Weber Marking Systems UK is a high quality provider of labels, labelling and coding products based in Macmerry, near Edinburgh in Scotland.

The company and its manufacturing and sales office in Southern Ireland form part of Weber Marking Systems Inc. a US based international labelling and coding leader providing label products and solutions to over 50,000 companies world wide.

In January 2007, the UK business took the decision to migrate from its incumbent Compass Management Information System, which it had been using successfully for some fifteen years, to a Shuttleworth Labels Management Information System (MIS).

One of the key deciding factors in the company's decision to adopt the Shuttleworth System was the inclusion of its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module. "It was a big selling point for us," explains Weber UK systems Manager Margaret Swan. "We didn't have a central point for information with Compass which meant that, for example, customers with multiple branches were treated as separate accounts and a lot of data was being duplicated. What Shuttleworth's CRM did for us was to streamline the entire customer relationship process and provide us with an umbrella view of our customer records as a whole. It's changing the way that we do business and in the way that we view our customers. Our customer services team is now able to call up any customer records such as invoice histories, order acknowledgements, open or closed orders, samples sent and stock items held and even our response times to dealing with queries. It's effortless."

At the forefront of the Shuttleworth Labels MIS in use at Weber UK is the company's Productive scheduling module which Margaret Swan describes as the 'powerhouse' that controls everything that runs through the factory. "All jobs going into production are handled by our Production Manager who uses Productive to arrange the workflow machinery schedule for the production operators to pick up.

It took us a little while to get used to but now that we are accustomed to it we wouldn't be without it," she says.

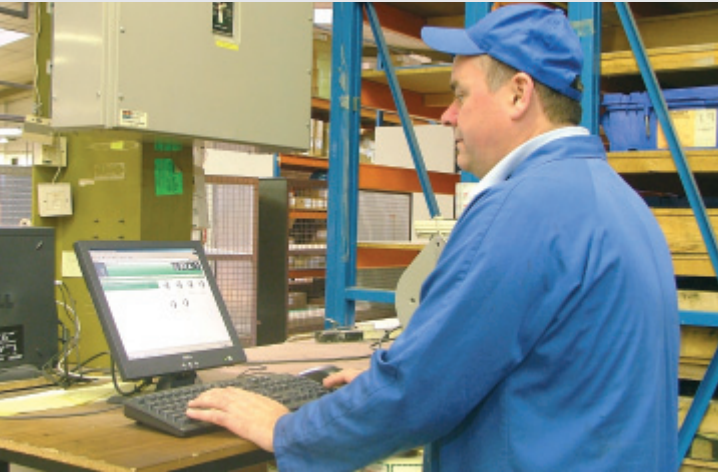


Handling workflow throughout production is Shuttleworth's DataFlow, an integrated Windows browser based shop floor data collection module. DataFlow is able to gather and present real-time accurate factory data using a multitude of digital data devices such as touch screens, PDA's, PC's and Mac's which can all be used to securely interrogate the job, identify the status of associated transactions and view related images – all within a smooth running digital production workflow.

"We're now collecting data against the job using the DataFlow module and our teams are finding it very easy to use because we're running the software on PC's. Therefore the DataFlow interface is presented to them in a very familiar and user friendly format. From here the production teams can quickly look up the jobs that have been allocated to their presses or finishing machinery, open up a production schedule to view the attached job docket and set parameters such as make ready times or complete or part complete a job. They can even log on and off for a coffee break by clicking on the coffee cup icon, so all data collection and information presented to them is based upon point and click icons. Any changes in production, costing or scheduling are fed back to the Productive scheduling system in real time, so it is very easy to keep on top of everything that passes through the factory," she says.



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E-commerce is regarded as central to future developments at Weber UK with Shuttleworth's Globetrader e-commerce module set to be positioned at the heart of the system. "We think that e-commerce through Globetrader will provide a great deal of positive benefits to many of our major customers who will be able to log onto our server and call off the labels that they need. We know that our customers are quite happy to handle call off's themselves and we're commencing a project to start recording label images that will sit alongside the stock references to enable customers to easily identify the label they are looking for and make call off's even easier. Some of our customers have very large label portfolios and we think that the Globetrader system can be linked to their central image bank via a unique stock code identifier which will provide good added value to these customers," she says.

With the positive benefits of the Shuttleworth MIS beginning to fall into place, migrating from a long established MIS to a totally modern system was not without its difficulties as Margaret Swan points out.



"We initially ran the two systems side by side for three months, and in retrospect I think that we should have continued to do so for a little longer because we could have used the time to learn more about what the Shuttleworth MIS could do for our business. We made one or two mistakes at first which could have been avoided if we had taken more time to consider how we wanted the new MIS to work for us," she says.

In conclusion Margaret Swan says that she believes that a lot of companies make the mistake of investing in an MIS and then sitting back in the belief that the system is going to sort out all of their problems for them: "What we found was that what you think you want when you first start out with your MIS is not necessarily what you actually want once you begin to understand how to maximise it to your benefit. We went through a massive learning curve right from the start of this project which has really paid off because we're now in the process of reviewing all of our standards against our equipment and against our estimating. We're beginning to see how we can measure and recoup our production costs against open jobs, and we are working to get the maximum benefit from the system to enable us to move forwards and bring us inline with modern business efficiencies, and this, for any company, is where the hard work and effort will eventually be rewarded."

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Margaret Swan
Systems Manager, Weber Marking Systems

CASE STUDY

