The benefits of a long term IT partnership

The relationship between Raven Roofing Supplies and Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS) goes back to 2004 when the company started to use an early KCS trading system alongside its accountancy package.

Results

- An easy upgrade to K8
- Minimal training needed for new starters
- Signature pads are streamlining transactions
- BI module tracks buying trends and branch performance
- Stock levels now visible across all six branches
- Integrated accounting offers customisable views

Five years later, during which time Raven opened three new branches, director Mark Applebee said, "I'm in no doubt that the results of the past five years have been partly attributable to how well we have made use of the system and our partnership with KCS."

Today the company operates from six sites and has completed a transformation from the original contracting firm established in 1971 to a supply only business. There are now several hundred active trade accounts and customers include local homeowners and roofing contractors, large building companies and developers as well as major builders' merchants. 65 staff are employed across branches in Twickenham, Thatcham, Basingstoke, Hawkhurst, Swindon and Crawley. "What I'm still most proud of," said Mark, "is the day to day relationship we have with all of our customers and suppliers, no matter what their turnover is. I'm also proud of how our staff remain with us for the long term. To have been with Raven for 20 or 30 years is not uncommon!"

As the company developed further, a decision was made to move to a more sophisticated business management system with integrated accounting. "It wasn't a given that we would stay with KCS," remembered Mark, "and we looked at several integrated systems. But one of my colleagues had worked in merchanting, was familiar with K8 and recommended we take a look. We had further expansion plans and it soon became obvious that K8 was a system that could grow with us. And we liked the team at KCS – they were super people!"

Mark said the upgrade was easy, particularly on the trading side. The Windows based system was so much easier for the team to work with and they were able to replace the pre-printed continuous stationery forms using K8's print manager.

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"It's very user friendly for our trade counter staff," said Mark. "And new starters only need minimal training from their colleagues. The yard staff can receipt in orders created in the system, which updates the stock files. They can also learn the system by doing simple transactions as they just enter a product name and don't need to know any codes.   We've recently added signature pads on our trade counters which has streamlined transactions further."

Purchasing is done at branch level using K8. Each branch is responsible for ensuring they achieve a maximum stock level at each month end, which is easily visible within the system. Stocktaking takes just one day per branch and there is no need to stop trading.

Financial Controller, Mandy Humm, explained that reports created within K8's BI (Business Intelligence) module highlight sales and customer data and help the management team track buying trends.   She said, "The system is set up really well for this and it's easy to drill down for further analysis. We also upload monthly sales targets for branch managers to the system in a .csv format, and they can see what they are achieving against target on a daily basis. K8 also makes it easy for us to track the individual branch performance."

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Mandy Humm,
Financial Controller,
Raven Roofing Supplies

Mandy has used the support team at KCS to help her make the most out of the integrated accounts package, and to customise layouts and views such as adding a purchase ledger column to track the turnover from rebates. She said, "I've never known a package like K8 before, we can tailor the standard system to suit us and we're constantly discovering new functionality. It's a system that just keeps giving - and we're learning more all the time."

Going forward there are plans to add document scanning functionality across all branches and Mark said he is also considering KCS' new ePOD app which enables drivers to manage deliveries and capture signatures on hand held devices. PODs will then automatically be sent back to the core system and will be available for customers to view.

According to Mark, the service from KCS is equally impressive. "The personal service we give our customers is reflected by how the KCS team treat us as individuals. Our KCS account managers keep in touch and know all our history. Over the years it's been brilliant!"

About Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS)
We provide specialist software, services and support to deliver fully integrated trading and business management solutions to distributive trades customers, large and small — wherever they are in the world. Immersed in the distributive trades for over 40 years, our technical experts are thought leaders in trading and management technology, and our innovative and flexible approach ensures our customers partner with us for the long-term.

Our mission is simple: to design and deliver high performance, integrated ERP solutions that enable our distributive trade customers to source effectively, stock efficiently, sell profitably and service competitively.

Contact Kerridge Commercial Systems

UK +44 (0) 1488 662 000 | Ireland +353 (0)1 469 3375 | hello@kerridgecs.com | www.kerridgecs.com

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