



## PORTSMOUTH AVIATION DIVERSIFIES BUSINESS FOR FUTURE GROWTH BY UTILISING IFS APPLICATIONS

**Portsmouth Aviation, a leading mechanical and aeronautical engineering company with 80 years of experience, successfully diversified its business to include not only mass manufacturing, but also bespoke manufacturing projects. Upgrading its ERP solution provided by IFS has been central to this business transformation and a key element of the company's growth strategy.**

### THE CHALLENGE

In 2005, Portsmouth Aviation (PA) used a legacy ERP system that offered limited scope for development. Key difficulties with the system included inefficient management of PA's vast database of over 80,000 legacy drawings and documents, intellectual property and records of parts history.

James Greaves, Systems Manager at Portsmouth Aviation said: "When I first joined the company, PA made use of a legacy system that made holding, updating and sharing records and company information onerous. What's more, I immediately recognised the system would not support the business's plans for growth. Ultimately, it had limited opportunities for development and as an ambitious company we needed to ensure we had the right ERP solution in place."

Greaves sought a more flexible ERP solution to meet the operational challenges arising from PA's organic growth. Among other things, the new solution would need to scale to handle a growing number of users and a steadily increasing amount of data. It would also need to provide substantially better visibility of, and accessibility to, critical information. This would improve business management, enhance collaboration, and increase the efficiency of business processes.

### THE IMPLEMENTATION

Following a competitive three-way pitch, PA chose IFS to provide an ERP solution that would serve all areas of the business. Greaves commented: "IFS stood out to us as the ERP provider that could help take our business to the next level. It was clear from the beginning that IFS's component-based architecture would give us the flexibility we needed to develop the system to suit our needs and add new modules as our company and business strategy evolved. This built in flexibility was of paramount importance to us."

The nature of PA's business was another key factor in the decision, said Greaves: "We're not a typical manufacturing company and our business model continues to evolve. For example, on top of mass manufacturing, we also offer a range of services such as work repairs and significant project management work."

### ABOUT PORTSMOUTH AVIATION

Portsmouth Aviation (PA) is an organisation steeped in history and is certainly no stranger to change. Originally founded in 1929 as a flying service, the business has evolved several times – from aircraft and engine overhaul and servicing; to issuing of Certificates of Air Worthiness; and then extending to repairing, refurbishing and flight testing of damaged service aircraft during World War II. PA even boasts aviatrix Amy Johnson as one of its earliest employees.

In recent years the business diversified further into providing technical and manufacturing services to the major UK civil and military aircraft constructors. Subsequently, this service portfolio has widened to include providing assistance in research and development to Ministry of Defence establishments in both aeronautical and mechanical engineering. Today the company provides development and production services in the procurement of a range of defence equipment covering all three of the Armed Services.



This means that although we're not a huge business, we are multi-faceted, and our ERP system needs to match this."

At present, the aeronautical engineering company utilises IFS software for document management, human resources, finance and e-invoicing, maintenance, customer management and product data management. This comprehensive range of modules has integrated all areas of the business, and simplified processes. For example, the site maintenance module allows for parts and their serial numbers to be recorded and makes automatic notifications when repairs and maintenance are due.

## RESULTS

Following the success of the initial implementation, PA has undertaken two further upgrades of the component-based ERP suite. The most recent being in May 2010 when it upgraded to IFS Applications 7.5 – the latest version of the application. The drivers behind the most recent upgrade included adding repair and maintenance modules to further integrate business processes, and implementation of a Finite Capacity Solution as the business geared up for expansion. The upgrade also saw PA become the first UK customer to implement a rollout of IFS Enterprise Explorer (IEE), a new user interface designed to improve usability and end-user productivity.

"The implementation of IFS Applications has been straightforward from the start, resulting in tangible benefits for the business," said Greaves. "For example, prior to IFS, we simply didn't have the ability to manage and version control documents centrally. The document management module alone has significantly reduced costs through time savings and also means our information is better managed and controlled. The increased usability provided by the search function on IEE means all users have quick and easy access to information, resulting in improved collaboration and increased productivity."

## A CHANGING BUSINESS

Perhaps one of the most valuable outcomes of the ERP system from IFS has been giving PA the ability to expand its project-based solutions division. Whereas pure manufacturing was previously PA's major revenue stream, the implementation of IFS' project management module has facilitated extraordinary growth: 50% of PA's revenue now stems from project management work. Greaves said: "In order for PA to continue growing and succeeding in the aviation engineering industry, we needed to broaden our focus to include project management and offer bespoke solutions to our customers. This transition has been made possible and, in no small part, driven forward by IFS' implementation. It has enabled us to be more agile as a company, and helped us to win business that we otherwise wouldn't have been able to."

Greaves said that IFS Applications has been rolled out to 150 users in its single UK office. "IFS is the package that everyone logs into first thing in the morning, and it is an inherent part of every business function. From its interoperability and connectivity to its efficiency and flexibility, IFS Applications has enabled PA to develop into a competitive and successful 21st Century business."

## BENEFITS

- Document Management module enables centralised management and version control of documents
- Reduced costs through time savings
- Increased usability and improved collaboration through latest IFS Enterprise Explorer (IEE) functionality
- Project management functionality has underpinned diversification of the business and enabled bespoke solution offerings



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