



## GLOBAL CONTRACT MANUFACTURER GETS TRANSPARENCY AND AGILITY WITH ERP SOFTWARE FROM IFS

**With roots stretching back to the 15th century, PartnerTech has a long-standing tradition of service and reliability. And as a successful contract manufacturer with sites on three continents, the ability to quickly respond to customer and market requirements is also very important. Implementing IFS Applications has given PartnerTech the transparency and agility to retain, and build on, its reputation, operating seamlessly and smoothly across multiple sites, currencies and languages, and taking operations and market changes in its stride.**

### PATCHWORK OF LEGACY SYSTEMS

PartnerTech acquired a number of key companies as part of its goal to become a global player in the industry. Although the strategy has been a success, one of the downsides was the resulting wide array of ERP software. Richard Skogh, VP, Supply Chain Planning & IT at PartnerTech, explains, “Some of the companies had home-grown solutions that were very old; others had proprietary systems, but these had been customized almost beyond recognition.” And there was more. Processes were different, things like article number varied for the same parts, and standardization was just in its initial stages. PartnerTech, a global operation that wanted to become the obvious choice for business-to-business contract manufacturing, could not afford to operate under these conditions. Skogh continues, “We offer our customers full service, from raw material procurement to distribution and after sales if they want—and everything in between—to help them optimize business and keep costs at a minimum. So we needed business software to match these demands and meet the challenges of operating at multiple sites in different languages and currencies. Consolidation and economies of scale were essential.”

### IFS—A DIFFERENT APPROACH

PartnerTech looked at a number of alternate solutions from leading ERP vendors. In the end, however, IFS drew the longest straw. “Actually, IFS came rather late in the selection process, almost a wild card,” Skogh recalls. “But its approach was very different. Rather than get bogged down in details, its consultants visited a number of our units, analyzed the challenges we faced and offered an overall strategy. In fact, IFS showed that it was prepared to take more responsibility.” In addition, IFS had experience of operating in countries in which PartnerTech is located, including Poland, Finland and China. “Actually, IFS felt right. Our cultures matched,” Skogh says.

### ONE SOLUTION, ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

“I know it sounds like a cliché,” Skogh says, “But every customer is unique. A medtech customer will have FDA compliancy at the top of their list, whereas an industry customer might be focused on PPM rates and nonconformity handling, for example.

### ABOUT PARTNERTECH

PartnerTech develops and manufactures products on behalf of leading businesses in the market areas of Defense and Maritime Industry, Information Technology, MedTech & Instrumentation, CleanTech and Point of Sale Applications. PartnerTech has approximately 1,300 employees at plants in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland, the UK, the United States and China. PartnerTech AB, the parent company, is headquartered in Vellinge, Sweden and listed on the Nasdaq OMX Stockholm Exchange.



**“Without IFS Applications, we wouldn’t be able to optimize our operations—and those of our customers—as we do today”**

Richard Skogh, VP, Supply Chain Planning & IT at PartnerTech



©Photo PartnerTech

We take full responsibility, whatever to-order production we offer—engineer, make or assemble.” IFS Applications is an essential enabler here. As markets and legislation change—and they can change quickly—PartnerTech has to be equally quick to adapt. With IFS Applications in place, everything is common to everyone. Regardless of the country of operation, language or currency, processes are the same throughout the company. This means, among other things, that an issue at one site might already have been tackled and solved at another. As the information is readily available in the ERP software, units can learn from each other, thereby accelerating response times. Shorter lifecycles and more frequent engineering changes are now easier to manage and, given PartnerTech’s ability to handle these aspects, are more of a value-adding business opportunity than a concern.

With so much in common, procurement has also been consolidated, enabling PartnerTech to reap the benefits of volume purchasing. Skogh again, “Apart from our manufacturing and engineering competence, the key to our success and to optimized customer service is the ability to balance rather uneven order flows from customers in divergent sectors. To do so we need accurate information that is easy to access wherever it is required in the company. IFS Applications gives us the transparency we need to do this. We know what’s happening at any given time, in any given unit. With this knowledge, we can plan purchases and take the actions required with a much higher degree of certainty that we had before.”

Having a multisite, multi-language and multi-currency solution has also enabled PartnerTech to reduce administration, speed up processes and introduce uniform reporting. Now it’s possible for management to issue a list of KPIs, for example, and it knows that the results will be returned in uniform format and will be based on a similar set of processes, making the data more accurate and therefore more valuable. “After all the mergers, we are well on our way to becoming one company, which is essential if we are to continue offering our customers high-level service,” says Skogh.

The benefits of IFS Applications are more wide-ranging, however. Component-based and integrated as it is, the business software can be implemented as PartnerTech requires. “For example, our Polish unit wanted to implement the maintenance component because it operates a lot of machinery. So we simply installed it at that site, knowing that this would not cause any problems at our other sites. It’s all the same solution. Conversely, we’re planning to introduce the HR component across the company. Here again, we know disruptions will be minimal,” says Skogh. “And for more efficient development and prototyping to begin with, we’re starting to use the project management capabilities in IFS Applications. There’s an enormous potential for enhancing efficiency and transparency with this component as it gives the status of an operation in what amounts to real time. This will benefit our customers to a great extent.”

PartnerTech’s abiding ambition is to provide its customers with production expertise and take an integrated approach that manages the entire lifecycle, dealing with change as it arises while delivering reliable, top-quality solutions with the shortest possible lead times. And it’s fulfilling its ambition with the help of IFS. Skogh concludes, “Without IFS Applications, we wouldn’t be able to optimize our operations—and those of our customers—as we do today.”

---

## BENEFITS

- Multisite, multicurrency, multi-language solution
- Greater business transparency
- Faster response to customer requests
- Common solution throughout the company
- Easier to implement new software —by site or company-wide
- Consolidated procurement processes
- Enhanced planning and forecasting capabilities
- Project management capabilities that enhance efficiency

---

## SOFTWARE

IFS Applications 7.5



©Photo PartnerTech