



SYNERGY HEALTH ACHIEVES GLOBAL PROCESS EXCELLENCE WITH IFS APPLICATIONS™

Synergy Health, the global leader in specialist outsourced services for the healthcare industry, has 91 sites in 15 different countries. With medical equipment sterilization a major part of the business, quality control process excellence is paramount. Synergy Health's investment in IFS Applications has given it a global standardized solution that adds value to the business and its customers.

THE PROBLEM

Synergy Health's previous operation comprised a number of outdated, disparate financial programs, reporting systems and spreadsheets. But operating within a sensitive and regulated business, common processes and controls across the entire business are vital.

"Sterilization in particular is a heavily regulated industry—it's imperative that our processes and controls are world class, and our record keeping 100 percent accurate and complete," says Gavin Hill, Group Finance Director at Synergy Health. "Synergy has been built on a combination of organic growth and acquisitions, so we'd ended up with a number of ageing, disparate systems that weren't giving us the level of information we needed. It's a complex group with many different businesses spanning different geographies, so standardization on a global scale—at an appropriate cost—was the key driver for us in terms of wanting a new ERP solution."

The company wanted the right platforms and tools in place to expand the business further and deliver additional services—something that could not have been done under the previous regime.

THE SOLUTION

In 2010, Synergy Health kicked-off its search for an ERP vendor that could provide a truly integrated global solution. A 10-strong shortlist was issued an RFI but, after also receiving responses from SAP and Microsoft Dynamics, it was immediately clear that only IFS had put real thought into exactly what the company was looking for.

While other vendors were more concerned with ticking boxes, IFS took time to understand Synergy Health as a unique business, says Hill. "After looking at vendor responses, we decided straight away that we wanted to work with IFS—it was quite obvious they were the only one that had looked properly at what we wanted.

"Ultimately, we chose IFS Applications because it was a global solution—should new acquisitions happen, we knew we could deploy our current version without having to look at other software or vendors. We felt that Microsoft and SAP would be nowhere near as flexible, and IFS was also the most cost-effective for the size and complexity of the group."

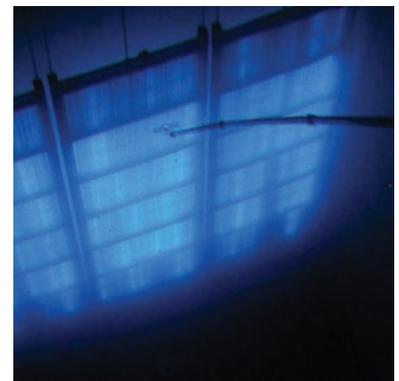
ABOUT SYNERGY HEALTH

Synergy Health delivers a range of specialist outsourced services to healthcare providers and other clients concerned with health management. These services are aimed at supporting customers to improve the quality and efficiency of their activities, while reducing risks to their patients and clients.

Headquartered in Swindon, UK, Synergy Health has a global presence and employs over 5,600 people across the UK & Ireland, Europe & the Middle East, Asia & Africa and the Americas.

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Site visits to current IFS customers, including global mining company Imerys, confirmed Synergy Health's decision and the contract was signed in 2011.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

After recruiting two full-time IT specialists to manage the project, along with dedicated teams in finance and operations, the implementation of IFS Applications began in September 2011. The first six months were spent collaborating on a global solution tailored to the business's needs, with a number of design workshops taking place to ensure an effective blueprint was in place come April 2012.

"With a sterilization business it's a niche market, and we were looking for a good functional fit with minimal modifications," says Hill. "We were also looking for a system that would be able to provide us with a competitive advantage, for example via the use of mobile apps and customer interfaces which we have now invested in.

"As well as the UK and Ireland, sites using IFS include Malaysia, Switzerland, France, Germany, the US, China and South Africa. We didn't even have US or Swiss operations when we signed the deal with IFS, which again highlights our need for a flexible solution."

THE RESULTS

Hill says the company's use of IFS Applications has improved global standardization and reduced risk across the business, in particular by replacing a number of paper-based operations and IT support. He adds: "We used to have paper trails and that's a risk because of human error. That's all now electronic and, added to the fact we've now switched off the old, disparate systems, much of the risk we faced on a day-to-day basis has been mitigated.

"Medical products are sterilized by a number of technologies, one of which is radiation treatment, at which point an indicator we place on each item changes colour, showing the lab the dose of radiation that item has received. These readings are uploaded into IFS Applications, which then sends certificates to the customer to let them know the equipment is up to our high standards.

"That whole process used to be manual and specific to site. Customers receive standard irradiation certificates, regardless of where in the world their product has been sterilized."

Hill says the company's use of IFS Applications has released staff to do more of what they should be doing instead of administration tasks, adding value to the business as a whole.

The original scope of work is set to finish in March 2014, but Synergy Health has also now invested in IFS' mobile touch apps. "With the mobile apps it's the simple things that matter for us," says Hill. "Purchase requisitions require a lot of approvals and our managers are on the road a lot, so things can get held up—now they can sign things off on the move."

Synergy Health will also use the mobile apps service to speed up expenses and reporting on the move. With more than 1,000 end users, the company is now looking at standardizing across other parts of the business, with IFS being a key enabler.

BENEFITS

- Improved global standardization
- Reduction of risk
- Fewer paper trails have reduced human error
- The reduction of administration tasks has freed staff to add value to the business
- Mobile apps have sped up the approval of purchase requisitions by managers on the road



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