

INDUSTRY 4.0

NETWORK SITE VISITS

Hansa Products

Hansa Products manufactures wood-chippers for the consumer and commercial market globally and has grown from seven people to 40 in the last 10 years.

Business overview

From their base in Hamilton, Hansa Products design, manufacture and service wood-chippers that are gaining a reputation for quality and performance around the world. Having grown rapidly over the past 10 years and moved to multiple new premises in the process, they have actively employed technology to cut down on administration time and costs and boost the value added by their team.

Background

As a rapidly growing manufacturer with a complex supply chain and large and geographically widespread customer base, the Hansa team were at risk of incurring large administrative overheads as they grew. Managing suppliers, customers and engineering changes alone could have introduced multiple roles to manage data entry and paperwork, as well as introducing opportunities for errors in data.

A traditional quoting process would involve capturing all the requirements of a customer on an email or phone call, transferring this data manually into a computer system, generating a PDF, saving it, locating it, and attaching it to a reply email to the customer. This was followed by entering the contact details into a CRM and manually scheduling a follow up call in a week's time.

This process could easily take a team member 20 minutes by the time they collated all the relevant information, typed up an email and sent it back to the customer. Multiplied across all the enquiries in a day this seemingly small task clocks up significant

non-productive time. Minor inaccuracies could also be introduced when manually entering information, for example with purchase orders, where getting a single digit wrong could cause significant waste downstream in production.

The solution

Early on in their growth, the management team identified the need to quickly and accurately manage data to operate efficiently and deliver the right service and experience to customers. They started small and engaged an independent company to build a data management portal for customers - tracking distributors, dealers and end users and their order history.

When enterprise automation is introduced, the information from the phone call or email is entered through data validated fields (dropdowns etc.) and the click of a button completes all the above steps instantaneously with very few opportunities for error.

This quickly progressed into the ability to automate call scheduling and follow up (similar to many CRM systems today). This ability to automate previously administrative and time-consuming tasks opened the management teams' eyes to the possibilities of automating numerous other processes.

After starting small, the team then scaled fast, rolling out solutions in quoting, purchasing, and managing engineering changes. The agile approach allowed them to deploy solutions rapidly and identify and fix issues rapidly which promoted a culture of continuous improvement around the ideal of 'zero admin.' >

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Conclusion

Anytime enterprise information needed to be collated and reported, or sent to suppliers or customers, it represented a potential waste and opportunity for inaccuracy, which in turn formed an opportunity to improve. Through these constant iterations, despite growing rapidly, the company has never needed to employ any admin staff. Any minor admin required is managed easily by existing areas in engineering, marketing, and sales.

This could equally apply to other businesses, for example those where engineering drawing updates are needed. An error-strewn and laborious process is converted into a one button click, which would also archive all old drawings of that part number, generate the new drawing, send the new drawing to the supplier and update revisions on paperwork.

When these results are mirrored across all enterprise functions the result is 'zero admin' with all tasks completed 'at source' meaning there is little to no delay in processing, and data is always up to date and accurate. This is essential with multiple points of contact servicing customers around the world.

Ultimately this has resulted in the Hansa 'office' team, despite having no administration staff, categorising themselves as having an hour or less of admin each week.

Key Learnings

In going through the Network Site Visit, there were several key learnings –

- Very few, if any, clerical or data errors due to automated data transfer between processes
- Significantly lower overheads as a result of less admin and production efficiency
- Elevation of team members to add more value for customers and take on more interesting roles
- Empowered change culture to constantly challenge the way systems operate and make them more efficient for the benefit of all.

About the site visits & Industry 4.0

The purpose of the Demonstration Network is to drive uptake of Industry 4.0 technologies among New Zealand manufacturers with the aim of increasing their productivity and global competitiveness. The Network of Site Visits (NSV) are part of the [Industry 4.0 Demonstration Network](#), which also includes a mobile showcase and smart factory showing cutting-edge industry 4.0 technologies in action. The NSV takes selected companies through a fully-funded assessment process to help them accelerate their own journey towards Industry 4.0, and sees them share their knowledge with other manufacturers.

Further questions?

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