



K8 implemented to improve competitiveness

Eyre and Elliston is a major electrical distributor based in Chesterfield, with 59 branches across the UK and currently carrying around 55,000 line items. Each branch offers trade counter, telephone sales and delivery, the company also offers a recycling service and an in-house lighting design facility.



Results

- Process continuity maintained
- System knowledge carried over
- Faster transaction processing
- New order margin review tools
- New system infrastructure
- Comprehensive EDI facilities
- Improved management reporting
- New electronic forms
- Starting point to extend system use

Operating in a highly competitive and price sensitive sector, Eyre and Elliston's IT business systems form a vital part of the company's competitive capabilities. Projects to implement new technologies are meticulously planned and prepared before branch roll-out.

A Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS) customer since 1998; by 2011, the company's text-based Rev 7 system was showing its age. Lacking a windows-style interface and modern functionality, bespoke modifications had also been made to the software which was becoming increasingly more difficult to support. A project, led by Commercial Systems Manager, David Monteith, was initiated. He said, "Given the scale of the project and a need to provide the business with the best systems to take the business forwards, we began by comparing K8 alongside a number of competitive solutions which were certainly given serious consideration. However, when we factored in elements such as K8's reputation, transferable Rev 7 knowledge, data conversion management and a successful existing business relationship, we choose K8. It was a well-informed, logical decision".

For both KCS and Eyre and Elliston, this was a major, technically complex project involving over 300 users – all going live on K8 simultaneously; one of the most demanding conversions to date. To begin with, a thorough gap analysis was conducted, "Module by module, we reviewed our current system, including the bespoke components and matched K8's capabilities with our business processes," said David. Special programming was required to convert some exceptionally large and essential data files to K8, particularly sales and purchase orders.

"We also required a development to provide us with a special, two-stage OMR (order margin review) for local management and regional director needs." The other fundamental specific was to ensure that the accounting for the two trading and group services businesses could be accommodated. Much more than a K8 implementation; Eyre and Elliston's entire IT infrastructure was also upgraded. Investing in a new wide area network and servers, a switchover to Citrix, as well as new back up and failover facilities - this was a sizeable project in itself, with a number of significant milestones to complete.

"Our new IT platform took a little longer to implement than was initially envisaged. We had to ensure that the new infrastructure was stable and robust, and we also carried our own performance load testing. It was absolutely essential that the network would meet, if not exceed the standards we required for our K8 system."

With such a large number of users, system training formed a large part of Eyre and Elliston's K8 project. A year long process, a key objective was for the implementation to be seamless

Case Study

Eyre and Elliston



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- David Monteith, **Eyre and Elliston**

for both customers and suppliers alike. Introducing K8 on a like-for-like basis with Rev 7, a well-structured combination of train-the-trainer, four regional training centres and manager-to-staff cascade approach proved highly successful.

The original plan was to go live sooner, but there were some challenges in completing the K8 specifics with everything fully tested and signed off. "We carried out a series of data conversion tests and on completion, were confident that stock, accounts, quotations, purchasing and sales data files would convert to K8 without a hitch. Finally, having postponed a few times, we set a go live for April 7th 2014," said David. There was a realisation at Eyre and Elliston that everyone's hard work and commitment to the project was about to be rewarded.

"On go-live day, I think it's fair to say that we all breathed a sigh of relief of a job well done by our own team and the Kerridge CS consultants, particularly our project manager who was with us every step of the way. "The success of the pre-implementation training programme meant that the need for handholding was much less than anticipated. And based on workload assessments, the company reported being around 95% efficient with their new system from day one.

Early indications of how Eyre and Elliston's K8 system settled in after go-live could be measured by a high level of user acceptance. Comments about K8 included 'brilliant' and 'easy to use', with efficiency improving from the start.

Clearly, Eyre and Elliston have established the foundation to bring on further K8 applications and extend the system's capabilities; one specific being the introduction of management information dashboards. "Without doubt, K8 is going to help us take the business forwards. And even though the project took somewhat longer than we first envisaged, I have to report mission accomplished", said David.

Highlights

- Meticulously planned and prepared before branch roll-out
- Key objective was for the implementation to be seamless for both customers and suppliers
- The company reported being around 95% efficient with their new system from day one

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 35 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.

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