

## Clwyd Compounders Case Study

# “A Little Pain for A Lot of Gain”: Clwyd Compounders Powers on with Aspera Solutions & Epicor

### At A Glance

#### Company Facts

- Rapid turnover, rubber compounds manufacturer
- Founded in 1979
- Headquartered in Wrexham, Wales, UK
- <https://www.clwydcompounders.com/>

#### Challenge

- Need for strong ERP efficiency, 100% traceability, customisation and quality control.
- Desire for real-time data access to improve efficiency, collaboration and overall responsiveness.

#### Solution

Epicor® ERP Version 10.1

#### Partner

Aspera Solutions

#### Lessons Learnt

- Don't fast track! Take time to scope everything out, make sure you are considering the needs of all stakeholders and do not allow scope creep to derail progress.
- Refine any “wish” list of potential customisations so that it is practical, realistic and based upon potential return on investment.
- Any investment in training in advance of your implementation, is money well spent. The greater your internal teams & key user understanding and ease with the system, the easier things will be.
- Lean heavily of your implementation partner! Their experience should make your experience easier.
- Aim for ERP Consultant Independence! Encouraging your internal team to upskill on ERP will decrease costs and expedite solutions over the long term.

#### Benefits

- Inventory management has improved to such an extent that Clwyd Compounders has reduced lead times by 50% and inventory by 20%,
- Key data access has improved considerably, leading to improved search capabilities, better decision making and more effective reporting, measurement and traceability,
- Automation has reduced the administrative workload of managers, technicians and employees.
- The company has a platform for efficiency and growth that propels the organisation forward and supports additional growth strategies, &

- Clwyd is doing more business with a stable headcount; increasing customers both in domestic and foreign markets and increasing overseas exports significantly.

## Customer Story

What a difference a year makes!

For most organisations, assigning one major action to the fiscal year is quite enough...not so for specialist rubber compounder, Clwyd Compounders Ltd.

For over 40 years, Clwyd Compounders has developed and supplied quality sheets and strips of compounded rubber to practically every engineering market in the world; from aerospace to pharmaceuticals, oil & gas, to food processing.

During a 12-month period between 2017 – 2018, Clwyd embarked upon an ambitious 5-Step strategy for growth that would see them:

1. Replace their legacy PROFIT system with an ERP solution;
2. Move to a new, custom built factory in Wrexham, Wales;
3. Develop the roles, responsibilities and expertise of the technical team;
4. Hire new management; &
5. Invest in state-of-the-art machinery.

First on this ambitious list was the replacement of legacy DOS-based systems with a modern ERP solution that could match Clwyd's substantial technical requirements and growth strategy.

After rigorous investigation of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 solutions, Epicor ERP delivered by Aspera Solutions was chosen, because they were the only provider that could deliver the control, flexibility and customisation Clwyd required.

### Challenge

With a database of over 23,000 distinct rubber compounds that are used to create everything from industrial sealing systems to aircraft window seals, squash balls to diving apparatus, Clwyd Compounders is a rapid turn-around, short lead time business that is valued for its responsiveness and technical capability.

Every compound formula is unique, and must be 100% consistent across every batch, irrespective of time delays between orders. This means that traceability is key; with everything from the batch date, to the machine(s) used, the operator in charge and the source of raw materials, logged and filed in perpetuity.

Given this onerous and critical requirement, Clwyd used the sunset of its legacy DOS system (PROFIT) as an opportunity to augment its ERP efficiency and traceability through Epicor ERP and Aspera Solutions.

According to David O'Hare, joint Managing Director of Clwyd Compounders, *"We needed a solution that was customisable and capable of giving us full IP control, traceability and data retention. It was a significant technical challenge and without doubt, the Aspera team was absolutely ace, a super resource that is extremely knowledgeable and very efficient"*.

## Solution Components – Warts & All!

Phase One replaced the outdated PROFIT DOS system with Epicor ERP across Finance, Inventory Management, Production Operations, Technical Design and Control, Quality Assurance, Purchasing and Sales. In addition, customisation integrated three legacy systems (Frontline for Asset Management, Daisy for Test Results and Trendview for Paperless Records).

During Phase two, Clwyd's historical data was organised into accessible files, with Asset Management, Information Worker and basic Epicor CRM implemented to facilitate CRM calls, task-lists and order entry.

Go-Live subsequently took place in September 2017, and to quote David, *"it was noisy!"*

*"Go-Live is like a jump of a cliff - you can always find reasons to delay, but in the end, you must take a calculated risk."*

*"We decided to fast track our Go-Live by two months so that it wouldn't clash with the move to our new factory (December 2017). While that decision was the right one at the time, it did mean that things didn't go smoothly, particularly in Production Scheduling and Document Print."*

*"I've no doubt that things would have run a lot smoother if we'd involved Aspera more in the early process and been able to take another couple of months to provide a detailed scope of work for customisation, technical and user requirements".*

Amidst all the "noise", Clwyd and Aspera reacted to the Go-Live difficulties in numerous ways:

- Pre and post Go-Live group training was bolstered with a series of daily 1-to-1 training sessions that ensured users were comfortable with how they used Epicor;
- A series of process improvement ideas were actioned within Technical Operations to resolve data issues; &
- Turnaround on queries, dashboards and reports was expedited so that efficient decision making was facilitated.

These actions turned the project around, turning the "noise" into tranquillity in just 11 weeks.

## Lessons Learnt

So, following a bumpy Go-Live, what are David's top five ERP implementation lessons?

1. Don't be naïve about the complexity of implementing an ERP solution! Take time to scope everything out, make sure you are considering the needs of all stakeholders and do not allow scope creep to derail progress.
2. Don't jump to customising your solution so that it matches what you are used to. Adapting to the 'out of the box' solution could be the best way forward, so refine any "wish" list of potential customisations so that it is practical, realistic and based upon return on investment.
3. Any investment in training in advance of your implementation, is money well spent. The greater your internal teams & key user understanding and ease with the system, the easier things will be.
4. Lean heavily of your implementation partner! As the saying goes "you don't know what you don't know", but trust that Aspera Solutions are ERP knowledge leaders. They know

the full extent of what is possible with Epicor, so tap them for advice on everything from scope documents to customisation versus 'out of the box' benefits.

5. Encourage your internal technical team to develop. Clwyd's technical team embraced Epicor and over time has become very self-sufficient, saving considerable time and money with in-house ERP expertise.

## Results

18 months after project initialisation, Epicor is doing exactly what Clwyd desired, providing a platform for efficiency and growth that propels the organisation forward and supports the company's additional growth strategies.

- Inventory management has improved to such an extent that Clwyd Compounders has reduced lead times by 50% and inventory by 20%;
- Key data access has improved considerably leading to improved search capabilities, better decision making and more effective reporting, measurement and traceability;
- With every passing month, more automated tools are being switched on, leading to a reduced administrative workload for managers, technicians and employees;
- The company is ERP consultant free, thanks to a highly trained and competent internal IT team that supports users with swift issue resolution and bespoke query and dashboard development; &
- Clwyd is doing more business with a stable headcount, increasing customers both in domestic and foreign markets and increasing their overseas exports significantly.

According to David, *"We had a bumpy start but I'm very pleased to report that everything is now working brilliantly."*

Implementing Epicor ERP was the first step towards success in Clwyd's 5-Step Strategy for Growth and had a positive effect on every subsequent growth endeavour.

The implementation led to better operations, which facilitated the transition to Clwyd's new custom-built factory in Wrexham, Wales. The experience substantially augmented the skill of the company's internal technical team. Epicor enabled effective and timely management decision making and boosted the effectiveness of Clwyd's investment in state-of-the-art machinery.

*"For Clwyd Compounders, implementing Epicor ERP was a little pain for a lot a gain. Epicor is now the beating heart behind our business so we'd have no hesitation recommending Aspera Solutions and Epicor to other manufacturers."*



Support Tel: + 353 1 461 1700

Email: [info@asperasolutions.com](mailto:info@asperasolutions.com)

[support@asperasolutions.com](mailto:support@asperasolutions.com)

**[Contact Us](#) if you'd like to hear more**