

Huhtamaki Case Study

Aspera Solutions Helps Huhtamaki Blueprint its ERP Implementation for Replication across Multiple Sites

At A Glance

Company Facts

- Huhtamaki: European Fiber Packaging Segment
- Founded: 1920
- Industry: Food Packaging
- HQ: Finland
- Website: www.huhtamaki.com

Challenges

- Desire for real-time data access to improve efficiency, collaboration and overall responsiveness
- Disparate systems and lack of integration
- Multiple sets of numbers and a dependency on excel
- Upgrade of unsupported legacy systems
- Third party integration and custom solution requirements

Keys to Success

- A comprehensive, ever evolving, project blueprint.
- Understanding of resourcing issues and requirements.
- Strive for continuous improvement instead of perfection.

Solution

Epicor® ERP

Partner

Aspera Solutions

Benefits

- Better decisions thanks to real-time data analysis and insight
- Eliminated risk associated to unsupported legacy systems
- Assurance of best practice processes across multiple sites
- Comparison of financial data between different companies and sites
- New service offerings and improved functionality help gain market share and improve customer relationships.

- Higher operational efficiency and profitability thanks to process integrations, improved reporting, better cost margin analysis & budgeting, reduced processing time and faster turnaround on orders.

Customer Story

With a legacy that spans nearly 100 years, Huhtamaki is a global specialist in packaging for food and drink. Headquartered in Finland, the company has 79 manufacturing units and 24 sales offices in 35 countries; including 4 European fibre packaging business units that expertly mould pulp and fibre technology to manufacture everything from fruit trays to egg cartons, wine bottle trays to cup carriers.

In 2015, Huhtamaki's European Fibre Packaging Segment recognised that a lack of system integration within and across, geographically dispersed sites was leading to operational inefficiencies and limited profitability analysis within its European units (in Northern Ireland, France, Czech Republic and the Netherlands).

It sought an ERP solution that would provide strategic, tactical and operational benefit for the long term and chose Epicor ERP, delivered by partner Aspera Solutions, as its platform of choice.

Initially dubbed, 'Project Everest' because of internal trepidation at the size of the project and its multiple geographies, Huhtamaki is now half-way to the project summit. Go-Lives have been successfully completed in two of the four sites, and results are quickly building momentum yielding operational, tactical and strategic benefit.

Huhtamaki is scaling 'Everest' with ease!

Pitching Base Camp

To start, Huhtamaki pitched its base camp with a comprehensive discussion and documentation of the needs, issues and nuances of the group, and each of the four geographically dispersed fibre packaging locations in Europe.

Then, over the course of six months, Huhtamaki and Aspera Solutions diligently assessed the requirements, goals and Epicor ERP upgrade opportunities available to the group and each local site. This exercise resulted in a comprehensive design plan / blueprint for implementation; setting out functionality requirements and process flow, documenting design and outlining the validation, deployment and consolidation procedures to be followed across every site.

Speaking on the importance of this blueprint, Paul Brown, Everest Project Coordinator, Huhtamaki Fiber Packaging commented,

"I've come to look upon the blueprint as the skeleton and the project as the meat on the bones! Thankfully, in crafting our skeleton, we had the benefit of Aspera's experience. Their process advice, training and technical assistance are the company's greatest strengths".

Acclimatisation

Given that the project involved sites in four different countries, consideration was also given to the possible integration of third-party solutions that more closely aligned to the needs of local teams.

Aspera's expertise expanded the original project scope to include Epicor Financial Planner and interfaces between the Epicor application and third-party products such as Preactor (for multi-constraint finite scheduling), Snap Fulfil (warehousing solution) and Wonderware, for paper-less shop floor implementation.

"Obviously, any time you choose to bolt on an alternative solution you run the risk of problems, but the flexibility to add third party solutions was one of the reasons why we choose Epicor ERP over its competitors. In the end, implementation complexity is the price you pay for a customised solution!"

In addition, Aspera provided custom solutions using Epicor technical toolkit for managing transport loads with multiple drops to various customers using different hauliers and automatically checking available stock and capacity to accept Sales Orders.

Reaching the Summit

Having recently started implementation at its third site in the Czech Republic, the momentum of experience gathered from both Northern Ireland and France, is making things easier third time around.

"The fact that we have test instances from two other sites means that our team in the Czech Republic can play around with these training instances using their own data. We can then document any issues that arise due to localisation requirements or country specific nuances, and then create requirement specification or change requests for testing prior to Go-live."

"It's corny I know but you have to look on each ERP implementation as a process of continuous improvement. Always take time to understand the lessons learnt and take them with you into the next project."

Lessons Learnt

So, what are Huhtamaki's key ERP implementation lessons? Here are Paul's 'top 5':

1. Never underestimate the importance of a comprehensive, achievable, project blueprint that is maintained on a regular basis.
2. Stay on top of resourcing by booking supplier time well in advance and back-fill resources so that delays don't happen when/if staff need to take time off for pregnancy, illness etc.
3. Interview the project team to gather feedback and take any key learnings into the next project.
4. Delegate! Use the experience of partners like Aspera and have both a technical lead and a project management lead so that they share the workload and keep things on track.

5. Always add a contingency in case things go wrong.

View from the Vista

Eighteen months on from the first Go-Live in Lurgan, (Northern Ireland), and six months on from the La Rochelle Go-Live in France, Hutamaki is delighted with its compounding ERP implementation results.

From a strategic perspective the company is making better decisions thanks to real-time data analysis and insight. It has eliminated any risk associated to unsupported legacy systems and is assured of best practice processes across multiple sites.

A strategic and vital gain for Huhtamaki Fibre Packaging business segment is the achievement of a common blueprint solution that is now being rolled out across all European sites. This has provided a template for common business processes and a standardised chart of accounts structure (HOCA – Huhtamaki One Chart of Accounts), facilitating comparison of financial data between different companies and sites.

Tactically, the company is now able to offer new services and improved functionality to customers that is helping it gain market share and improve customer relationships.

Operationally, Huhtamaki is working more efficiently and profitably thanks to process integrations, improved reporting, better cost margin analysis & budgeting, reduced processing time and faster turnaround on orders.

“5000+ project hours, 1000’s of miles travelled, and many friendships made”.



Support Tel: + 353 1 461 1700

Email: info@asperasolutions.com

support@asperasolutions.com

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