SAP Silver Partner

British Motor Heritage: Driving the Passion for British Classic Cars with SAP® Business One

Partner

Company
British Motor Heritage Limited

Industry, products, and services
Automotive – manufacturer of genuine components for British classic cars

Revenue
£5 million (€6.2 million)

Web site
bmh-ltd.com

SAP® solutions
SAP® Business One application

Partner
APH
www.aph.solutions

Keeping British classics alive and cruising

It's a bright, sunny Saturday, and an immaculately maintained 1967 MGB Tourer winds its way through the timeless beauty of the English countryside. The top is down, and there's a picnic hamper on the rear rack. For the growing legions of British classic car enthusiasts everywhere, there's no better way to spend the day. And for fitting their MGBs and other classics with authentic parts, there's no better company than British Motor Heritage Limited.

It all started in 1975, when the company was established by Rover to provide enthusiasts with genuine components for classic British cars, manufactured to exact specifications and using original tools whenever possible. Today, British Motor Heritage is independently owned and staffed by an extraordinary team of craftspeople who combine traditional skills with the most modern materials, equipment, and processes.

Car enthusiasts in the United Kingdom and worldwide rely on British Motor Heritage to keep their own investments in British heritage in top, authentic condition – and demand is growing. To meet the demand, British Motor Heritage runs its operations on the SAP® Business One application. The software is improving visibility from production planning to sales, and it's helping staff deliver more quality components while reducing administrative headaches and cost. This means more chances to spot an iconic British classic like the 1959 original Mini for many more Saturdays to come.

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Getting operations in gear for rapid growth

There's nothing simple about building authentic parts for the original Mini, Austin-Healey Sprite, Triumph Stag, Morris Minor, and other British classics. "We produce all the parts that go into the complete MGB body shell," says John Pollard, business systems manager at British Motor Heritage. "And we do it in the same handcrafted way that it was done in the 1960s and 1970s, with the same press tools and jigs and the same reliance on highly skilled people."

Its dedication to craftsmanship has made British Motor Heritage the largest classic automotive components manufacturer in the world, and the world is clamoring for more. Unfortunately, the company was rapidly outgrowing the legacy systems supporting its operations, which provided little visibility and control over financial, accounting, sales, purchasing,

and manufacturing processes. "It was difficult to keep track of our growing inventory," says Pollard. "And we never had an up-to-date picture of our financials."

British Motor Heritage wanted real-time reporting and analytics that could help it optimize inventory levels and better plan and monitor production activities in order to stay in sync with customer demand. "We knew that with the right software solution, we could stay on top of our cash flow, and we wouldn't have to spend days completing our monthly and yearly financial reporting," explains Pollard.

"We are always expanding our parts catalogue, and we also make multiple versions of the same part, so keeping track of all the stock and keeping it at the right levels is a challenge."

John Pollard, Business Systems Manager, British Motor Heritage Limited

The right choice for clarity, savings, and scalability

In replacing its legacy system, British Motor Heritage wanted to make sure that it would not outgrow the new software solution. "With SAP Business One, we have a single solution that's future-proof," says Pollard, "so it can scale to meet growing customer demand and can be configured to meet our evolving needs." The software makes critical information available in real time, so employees can see immediate changes in stock availability and have sales, order, and other financial information at their fingertips.

British Motor Heritage also wanted an enterprise software solution that would streamline its business processes and align them to industry best practices. "Our legacy system left a lot of gaps in terms of getting information to the right people at the right time," explains Pollard. "And we developed several work-arounds that were not sustainable in the long term. SAP Business One has best practices built in, so that ultimately we could provide everyone with the right tools to be as efficient and cost-effective as possible."

"Once we decided to replace our legacy system, SAP Business One was the logical choice; nothing else out there had the scalability and flexibility we needed."

John Pollard, Business Systems Manager, British Motor Heritage Limited

Tuned for fast deployment and rapid adoption

Ensuring that everyone experienced a smooth transition from business processes built around the legacy system to the processes of SAP Business One that support best practices was a critical challenge for British Motor Heritage. "To ensure rapid staff adoption and to avoid any business disruptions, we customized a lot of user interfaces in SAP Business One to match our legacy processes," explains Pollard. "We could then slowly pull back those interfaces and bring everyone in line with the software's best-practice functionality."

To help deploy SAP Business One, British Motor Heritage met with a number of SAP partners. "APH Computers Ltd. was the most successful in demonstrating its SAP Business One expertise as well as a full grasp of our business requirements," says Pollard. APH worked closely with staff at all levels of British Motor Heritage to enable a rapid four-month implementation. "The team at APH really understands that it's our people that make British Motor Heritage so special," says Pollard. "And they share our passion of getting more parts for more British classics back into manufacturing."

"Our business depends on the maverick thinking of our people, and we were able to rapidly configure SAP Business One to support our very unique manufacturing practices."

John Pollard, Business Systems Manager, British Motor Heritage Limited

Turbocharged reporting and efficiency

SAP Business One is making information previously stored in separate systems or locked in a spreadsheet available across British Motor Heritage. "The software now makes it incredibly easy to view customers' accounts, sales history, and available inventory," says Pollard. "That and other information is not only reliable – it's timely."

SAP Business One is empowering people across the company with the self-service tools they need to do more on their own. The application's built-in SAP Crystal Reports® software has revolutionized the company's business reporting, which makes Pollard's team very happy. "Prior to the implementation, our small IT staff was spending a lot of time compiling reports for everyone in the company," he says. "With SAP Business One, reporting is a piece of cake, and the software lets my team focus on the core mission of delivering innovation."

The company has eliminated the days of effort required to complete its financial reporting. "Month-end and year-end reporting? No problem, you just run it," says Pollard. "We no longer have to put holds on builds or orders just to ensure reporting accuracy; and even our auditors love it because now it's so much easier for them to find information."

"Many of our customers know more about the cars than we do, and they share our passion for authenticity. SAP Business One helps us maintain that authenticity while constantly improving everything we do across the business."

John Pollard, Business Systems Manager, British Motor Heritage Limited

Better visibility for the road ahead

SAP Business One is saving time and eliminating complexity across the company, and it's enabling British Motor Heritage to put more focus on optimizing manufacturing operations and customer service. "Our agility and service levels have definitely improved since implementing SAP Business One," says Pollard. "Our daily fill rate is going up, and we can take advantage of customer trends in a very cost-effective way."

Most recently, planners at the company are gaining a better understanding of required production resources as well as the component inventory levels they need to maintain. "SAP Business One provides us with the look ahead that we didn't have before," says Pollard. "So we can better anticipate demand and keep inventory levels low." Planners can create different production scenarios to determine impacts on production resources, component and finished inventory, and cash requirements.

"We're using SAP Business One to improve production planning for the core products that make up about 90% of our sales," says Pollard. "We can analyze the entire sales history to forecast demand over the next weeks, months, and years and then determine our specific production requirements over the same time period. It's absolutely fantastic!"

"With the planning functionality of SAP Business One, we know the demand picture ahead, so we can reduce inventory levels right now."

John Pollard, Business Systems Manager, British Motor Heritage Limited

A bright future for classic cars

British Motor Heritage is moving forward with even more improvements in its business processes. For example, the company just upgraded to the latest version of SAP Business One to take advantage of new functionality, including enhanced pick and pack flexibility. "We can put together orders based on our own custom-defined criteria," explains Pollard.

The company is also expanding the software's footprint to precisely monitor each stage of its pro-duction process, and it's looking at additional SAP software to streamline sales orders. "SAP Business One has made it so much easier for us to constantly improve operations to meet growing demand," concludes Pollard. "It's revolutionized our ability to collaborate with partners like APH to get more tools and technology in place quickly and cost-effectively."

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