Kerridge
Commercial Systems

Delivering every time with K8 Babbage

National parts distributor, FPS, delivers goods to 2,500 customers, up to 6 times daily from its national network including their NDC in Sheffield. Around 40,000 transactions flow through the FPS business on a typical day, so having the right ERP solution in place is critical to the success of the business.

Results

- Exemplary project management
- New system architecture
- Smooth and seamless transition
- Latest features and functionality
- Enhanced returns handling
- Business Continuity fulfilled
- More efficient upgrade platform
- Oracle 'Red Stack' advantages
- Reduced change management risks
- Faster and leaner issue resolution

Beyond the standard

With a long reputation for excellent customer service, FPS has been in distribution and wholesaling for over 80 years and boasts a product portfolio that now spans the Automotive, Industrial, Travel & Leisure and Retail sectors. For the past 20 years, KCS technology has supported the flow of FPS' 'life-blood', ensuring its 1,000 strong staff can efficiently and effectively manage the end-to-end processing of all transactions across its network of 22 sites.

Partnering for the long-haul

The KCS/FPS relationship stretches back to 1992 and follows an evolutionary path through KCS' advancing solutions from Rev.7 through to K8. An integral part of FPS' strategy has been to keep their ERP system up to date so that the business can achieve operational efficiencies and continue to delight customers with excellent service.
In 2015, FPS upgraded to K8 Babbage, complete with additional features and benefits including fewer user exits, new role-based permission facilities, and user-defined table functions.

Finance & IT Director at FPS, Jonathan Eden, explains:
"Moving to K8 Babbage means that we can take advantage of Oracle 'Red Stack' and the new incremental upgrade architecture – both of which are important to us as we progress the system. In terms of application functionality, improvements such as the enhanced customer returns handling are already proving to be beneficial."

Planned to perfection

Jonathan Eden knew that to deliver the large and complex upgrade project successfully, working in close collaboration with KCS would prove a critical success factor, along with strong project sponsorship from both companies, exemplary project management, and quality internal communications:

"It was imperative to keep our colleagues across our network fully informed. Telling everyone what we were doing - why, when and how - helped us to maintain strong engagement with the project. Adopting an 'agile approach', we carried out practice upgrade runs, timings obtained were fed into go-live planning, and expedient issue resolution helped to keep the project on track."

// Moving to K8 Babbage was unquestionably the right strategy – we now have an efficient process for future upgrades.

Jonathan Eden, Finance & IT Director, FPS

Highlights

- Close KCS and FPS collaboration for agile approach

- "Best planned, communicated, and executed project"

- Only 6 hours downtime and seamless transition

- New architecture to enable incremental upgrades

- Reliable system to 'maintain customer delight'

- Improved operational efficiencies and reduced risk

A smooth transition

After significant testing from both KCS and FPS, K8 Babbage went live in February 2015. Support from both companies' IT, finance, operations and supply chain staff during the go-live and initial week of usage, resulted in a well-planned and successful transition. Jonathan Eden recaps, "Operational downtime was just 6 hours and the Sunday shift started their work seamlessly on K8 Babbage."

The system then moved into the Early Life Support phase, which ensured that post go-live issues could be resolved effectively. "Some of our users commented that it was the best planned, communicated and executed upgrade to date."

'Keeping the lights on'

Delivering a high-performing, reliable system to maintain 'customer delight' and user productivity – or to 'keep the lights on' – was a key project objective. The FPS Business Systems team also met the other objectives, which were to provide excellent service to all stakeholders and to add tangible value to the business. "Moving to K8 Babbage not only meant that we stayed on track with these objectives, it was also unquestionably the right strategy for FPS. We are now positioned to take smaller incremental steps with system upgrades – a more efficient process and with a reduced change management effect."

"With engagement, commitment and great teamwork from all stakeholders, we addressed the challenges and completed the project successfully", concludes Jonathan Eden.

The road ahead

Following the transition to K8 Babbage, FPS has now loaded their first feature release – a small but important step enabled by the new architecture. Jonathan Eden is also now exploring the possibility of using further modules including KCS' Delivery Management System, Datawarehousing, CRM, and Business Intelligence to drive even greater operational efficiencies.

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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