Kerridge
Commercial Systems

MKM Building Supplies success with K8 system

One of the potentially most rewarding aspects of a modern, fully integrated trading system such as Kerridge Commercial Systems' K8, is that it provides something of a blank canvas for builders' merchants to work with.

Results

- Branch roll-out template

- Recommended order facility

- Excellent stock control tools

- Supports customer service goals

- Effective financial controls

- Robust credit chase processes

- Tailored workplace dashboards

- K8 electronic forms and documentation

- Scalable platform for future development

Comprehensive, flexible and adaptable, K8 has the capabilities for users to fine tune the system to suit their own requirements and achieve long term aspirations.

MKM, with 40 branches - the UK's largest independent merchant have, from the start, made K8 their own. They have become largely self-sufficient in areas such as adding new branches to the system, user training and support, implementing new processes and setting up management information tools. At the same time, they have come to appreciate K8's qualities as an excellent trading tool that fulfils their operational needs and deep-rooted customer service principles.

Prior to K8, MKM, which first opened its doors in 1995, were using a 'green screen' system which had reached the end of its life. The company needed a fully integrated and scalable system that would help the business to expand and develop. MKM sought to partner with a company that understood their sector and who could respond to changing market conditions. MKM's CEO David Kilburn, who founded the company, had previously used Kerridge Commercial Systems products. When the need arose to replace the text-based system, K8 was shortlisted as a prime contender and subsequently an order was placed for an 18 branch system which went live in 2006.

As a class-leading solution, one of the major benefits of moving to K8 was that MKM could have all the requisite functionality in a standard system without the need for bespoke modifications. Furthermore, as a result of using a hosted platform in place of an in-house server, the MKM IT team, led by Edward Broderick, have been able to concentrate more on branch-level operator training and local application support. It has been an important factor in MKM's development to know that the system's infrastructure is reliable and well looked after - reporting in excess of 99.9% uptime. "Given the size and nature of our business, we need to have a good understanding of our system status, but I don't have to be on call 24/7. And significantly with business growth, which is set to continue, the flexibility of our hosted server resource and network management gives us no concerns about capacity issues," said Edward. Being able to add additional branches with the minimal involvement of Kerridge Commercial Systems, has been a key component in the evolution of the system. MKM uses a number of pre-set 'template' branches created in K8 which they quickly convert into operational status. One of the in-house systems team is deployed to train staff before a new branch opens and for subsequent hand-holding.

Although some users still make comparisons with MKM's previous system, K8 is well thought of by the users, "We recently asked our branch directors to tell us what they would like K8 to do for them in an ideal world scenario.

K8

// As a functionally-rich, integrated solution, we could see that K8 would enable us to move the business on...

- Edward Broderick, IT Manager, MKM Building Supplies

Highlights

- Processing £160m worth of business annually, to more than 25,000 customers

The responses were essentially comments about minor process issues. The general consensus is that K8 is a good, flexible and reliable system – it's currently processing £160m worth of business annually, to more than 25,000 customers." K8 has proved itself capable of supporting the company's principles of delivering high quality customer service, while at the same time maintaining central control.

One of the most significant developments undertaken by MKM's IT team has been to harness the apabilities of the K8 Workplace tools. "We have provided users with fast access to designated functions, pdfs, reports and drill-down facilities. The dashboard displays include clear, graphical presentations and traffic light-style indicators, with the whole suite delivered according to user roles and permissions. Given the degree of branch level autonomy, MKM makes full use of the suggested order features and at the same time, allows branch directors to use the system for special order items - a significant part of the business.

"Essentially, our business model is based on making the most from local market knowledge, providing customers with what they want and being as flexible as we can. K8 supports those principles very well." MKM are clearly determined to use K8 to maintain the company's capabilities to expand the business, and at the same time, strive to achieve more efficiency, improve customer service and ensure the right balance of control between branches and head office. "Our goals for K8 include using the system to eliminate as much paperwork from our business as we possibly can. In parallel, we want to remove or simplify anything that slows people down. Another important priority area is to increase the level of management reporting from K8."

Edward told us that MKM want to take K8 much further and that includes contributing to the product's future development. "At branch level, although we have complete confidence in K8 to support our purchasing, stocking and selling processes, we want to do more in the customer service areas. It's essential that we keep pace with evolving expectations." With such enthusiasm for making very good use of IT systems and maximising the benefits available, MKM clearly intends to be at the forefront of the K8 user base for a long time to come. "We are certainly looking forward to moving ahead with our K8 investment and furthering our partnership with Kerridge Commercial Systems."

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.

Contact Kerridge Commercial Systems

UK +44 (0) 1488 662 000 | Ireland +353 (0)1 469 3375 | K8info@kerridgecs.com | www.kerridgecs.com

ORACLE Gold Partner