XeBusiness

Newsletter 2006/07

Supply chain computer solutions for quick response and cost reduction - simply and economically

Thoughts about XeBusiness………….

I can report that XeBusiness has once again made progress in what has been another difficult year for the apparel and textile sector on which we focus our market leading IT solutions. We have continued to deliver profits and positive cash flow notwithstanding the turbulence and rapid change both in the UK and offshore as apparel and textile importers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers struggle with margins and ever increasing pressures to streamline and make more responsive their operations while closely managing their cost base.

This has meant that our own aggressively executed marketing and product development strategies have had to mirror the changes taking place in the sector to provide maximum benefit for our client base and to ensure our own continued viability.

David Cullis – MD of XeBusiness Ltd

We have done this by continuing to focus and invest in the four main elements that add value to the company, namely our staff, our product and service offerings, our client base and the strength and reach of the XeBusiness brand.

The last two years since the abolition of import quotas have served to remind specialist IT companies like XeBusiness that success is a product of hard work and not of fashion (no pun intended!). At XeBusiness we have always acknowledged this and we continue to apply our unique and in-depth sectoral knowledge, track record, expertise and experience of the sector to achieve our mission that may be summarised as being: ***the supply of comprehensive and integrated IT solutions simply and economically for quick response to sales demand and cost reduction.***

Sales Success…………………

The company had more than its fair share of sales success in 2006 from both existing and new business clients.

Major system upgrade orders were received from Henri-Lloyd International and the Stirling Group, with Henri-Lloyd being the first UK client to commit to the new 'Enterprise' version of Xe-ERP2 featuring an SQL compliant relational database engine. The upgrade will underpin Henri-Lloyd's fast growing global trading operation covering both their highly regarded marine and fashion ranges.

Stirling, one of the largest and best regarded M and S apparel suppliers in the UK, had their 'best of breed' XeBusiness Warehouse Management System (WMS) upgraded to incorporate a number of feature and functionality enhancements to support the close relationship with their major retail partner.

Other client system upgrade contracts were received from Praybourne (corporate workwear), Burberry (fashion), Laundry Athletics (fashion - formerly Cult Clothing), Mikar Holdings (workwear), Monarch Textiles (workwear) and Gemini Fashions (fashion).

There was no slouching on the new business front either with contracts being received from Orla Kiely (fashion), Tailored Image (corporate workwear), Texline (corporate workwear), Pinstripe Clothing (fashion), Wensum Tailoring (fashion) and Corona Manufacturing their Mauritius based off-shore manufacturing partner, amongst others.

The Hong Kong based Wing Tai Group placed dual contracts for Xe-ERP2 for their UK based subsidiary, Wensum Tailoring and their manufacturing company in Mauritius, Corona. Both systems will be linked via an Internet VPN for secure information sharing providing Wensum with real time access to WIP information on the factory floor at Corona in Mauritius. Strangely enough there has been no shortage of volunteers amongst XeBusiness consultants (and management!) to assist with the implementation at the Mauritius end.

Building the XeBusiness Brand………………

We continue to build our brand in a global context with regular press releases and case study editorial to trade journals, the trade press and web portals featuring and forums dedicated and specialising in the textile sector. As evidenced by our Google 'hit rate' – trying keying in XeBusiness into Google – this approach to disseminating information about ourselves is paying off. We now have sites and re-sellers in Eastern Europe, North Africa, India, China and Vietnam.

An enquiry from a corporate workwear manufacturer in Azerbaijan recently resulted in us ending a consultant over there at their expense to demonstrate what we had to offer. Finally managing to obtain insurance cover, John Woolley spent three interesting days at Baku, the capital, returning safe and sound. Negotiations are on-going – watch this space for more information.

This press release and editorial activity is supplemented by attending and participating in conferences and exhibitions – often as speakers - and we also arrange our own short briefing sessions and workshops for key people within apparel and textile suppliers.

See over for more news

Our People...................
Profile of John Woolley – Sales Director and Consultant

Following an extended period in the apparel and textile sector in the North West of England as an operations executive, John joined Kewill-Xetal (the IT Company specialising in the sector in the 80's and 90's and from which XeBusiness emerged in late 1999) in 1986. He left Kewill-Xetal in 1997 for a brief flirtation with a competitor and then rejoined the newly constituted XeBusiness in 2000.

Over the last 20 years, John has gained experience in virtually every aspect of the operations of both Kewill-Xetal and then XeBusiness covering sales, project management, consultancy, client training and product development and customisation.

John's knowledge of the sector, its best practice and how our systems can be deployed to achieve rapid efficiencies and payback on investment is second to none. In addition to his sales duties, he also stays closely in touch with new clients during the implementation phase in his capacity as a highly experienced consultant to ensure they get maximum value from their investment in XeBusiness products quickly and effectively.

John Woolley and the rest of the XeBusiness team, the balance of their skills, the spread of their functional capabilities and their external reputation all contribute to support the company through the difficult journey to achieve success.

Product Development............

Xe-ERP2 – On-Going Investment in Innovative Functionality

We continue to invest in and enhance our market leading, specialist business management system Xe-ERP2.

Key product areas that have been enhanced to reflect continually changing best practice include:

Pre Production and Product Data Management (PDM) - this vital part of global sourcing has been strengthened to reflect the fact that virtually all UK based suppliers now import product from low cost manufacturing areas. The module enables the control and management information requirements of pre production product sampling with built in event management to ensure all relevant production specification detail and process – with full size chart management etc -is provided to ensure production target dates are met. The system is now also highly visual in terms of incorporating graphs and images and also features integrated email and SMS alert monitoring and reporting of deviations from pre-set milestones.

Management of Off-Shore Sourcing Logistics - this area has also been further enhanced to assist with ensuring production contracts placed with off-shore manufacturers meet pre-agreed shipment dates by the close WIP event and critical path monitoring of each production order from the time it is placed by the UK importer. Deviations from plan are automatically highlighted to enable remedial action to be taken early. Detailed costs are also captured and analysed to facilitate accurate pricing and margin management.

Sales Order Processing and Inventory Management – this core part of the product has been made easier to use for small suppliers. It has been streamlined to rapidly capture, record, process and fulfil orders from multiple sources whether from hard copy documents, email attachments, from the telephone (telesales and teleordering) and from web sites and the Internet direct.

Low Cost Web Site Shop Front Template – this is now available for suppliers wishing to sell off the web and provide feedback to customers about the status of orders placed. Full web site design and maintenance with Xe-ERP2 back-office integration is now also available from XeBusiness working in conjunction with a specialist Internet partner.

Distribution – this area of the system has also been substantially enhanced to streamline all aspects of receiving, picking, shipping and invoicing stock whether or not as part of our highly functional Warehouse Management System (WMS) module. RF Bar code scanning is extensively incorporated and RF/ID data capture will be available in 2007.

Launch of New Enterprise Database Platform for Xe-ERP2..................

The current version of Xe-ERP2 now features an industry standard and SQL compliant relational database. This provides a very large improvement in performance, particularly for large system implementations involving the processing of high volumes of transactions. However, the improved resilience and performance now available with the current version of XE-ERP2 featuring this new database, provides benefit to even very small client companies, given the low cost of ownership of the database product. *It is our intention that all clients over 2007 will be offered the opportunity to upgrade to the new version of Xe-ERP2 featuring this enhanced database platform*. Both MS Windows and Linux server versions of the product are available.

X e -ERP 2
N e w
T e chnology
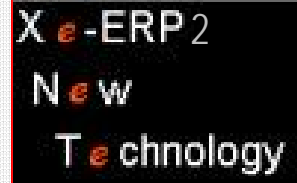
Supporting Xe-ERP2 to Provide Benefit to Clients – Quickly and Effectively............

As existing clients are already aware, a full range of services are available to ensure our products are fully supported and provide maximum user benefit. We have extended our annual support and maintenance service to include additional service features at the request of multiple clients and based on our analysis of requests for assistance received that we record and continually analyse to feed-back to our training programmes.

Given the mission critical nature of our systems, the support services we provide are critically and strategically important and they continue to attract rave reviews from our clients.

We are increasingly receiving requests from clients to **integrate Xe-ERP2 with their websites** when these are being used for order taking. The experience gleaned to date in doing this means we can now do this quickly and cost effectively to enable the implementation of 'end to end' ecommerce and order fulfilment.

We can also assist with **transferring data automatically** from and to any sub-systems in use within your company – including Excel spreadsheets – should you require to benefit from the speed and accuracy auto transfers of this nature can provide.

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WENSUM

GEMINI

THE CORPORATE WARDROBE

fryer

MONARCH TEXTILES

Roocroft & Wright Ltd

DENNES

LYNBEN LTD

THE MIKAR GROUP

Praybourne

RFD

Fielding MANUFACTURING

Orla Kiely