

One Hundred Thirty Four year old factory automation equipment manufacturer acquires Finesse

The challenges of designing, producing and installing complex factory automation equipment along with increasing global competition led George Koch Sons to search for a business tool capable of integrating all company-wide operations. Numerous “islands of automation” were employed making it difficult to obtain current metrics for managing operations and guiding the company.

According to Steve Church, President, “There were many reasons GKS chose Enhanced Systems & Services’ (ESS) Finesse ERP software as the solution to assist in the operation of the business. Finesse provides a platform that uses current technology, is adaptable and able to grow as we grow, is tightly integrated throughout the different modules, met our needs for user friendliness and has a web-based interface. All of these were important items but the most impressive point was their people.”

“After extensive evaluation of many software suppliers, GKS selected Finesse for two primary reasons: the simplicity and flexibility of the software and the knowledge and expertise of ESS personnel. Finesse has all the functionality we need to run our business. Furthermore, it is easy to use and flexible. We anticipate our organization will change and grow in the future and we wanted software that could change and grow with us. It was also significant to us that the people at ESS could speak our language. Like us, they know that project-oriented companies have different ways of doing business and different terminology. The people at ESS Finesse made us feel very comfortable they understood our business demands and requirements and their other customers were just like GKS. We were impressed with how similar ESS’ customer references were to GKS (not in terms of products delivered but in terms of project-oriented operations). This was very significant in our evaluation and selection process.”

Steve Rapagnani, Director of Operations/Engineering, explains, “I was amazed at the number of Excel spreadsheets, engineer-created Access databases and Word documents being used in the daily decision making process. We needed a process for streamlining data used in our project management, manufacturing scheduling and overall decision making

process. We reviewed numerous different ERP packages and kept returning to Enhanced Systems and Services' Finesse ERP software as the top choice. I was especially impressed with the overall knowledge and ability of the sales engineer to understand our business and demonstrate the ability of Finesse as it relates to GKS requirements."

As with any company, the ability to report financial progress quickly and efficiently to investors is paramount. According to CFO, Tom Falkenstein "It currently requires up to 5 days to close the books and create the required reports for the Board of Directors. Time wasted creating reports could be better spent analyzing our financial performance and opportunities for improvement." Tom also found that many critical processes used in day to day operations were known only to one or two accounting employees. "I realized if these employees were no longer part of the GKS team there would be serious implications for the daily functions of accounting. The overall lack of shared knowledge in the current system has become a real concern," voices Falkenstein.