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# The Sky's the Limit Skyforce Case Study

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# The Sky's the limit

By introducing MRP and sales order processing software, aircraft navigation system manufacturer Skyforce has seen stock accuracy climb to more than 98% and stock turns move up from less than 3 to over 6 on a like for like basis.

Many small to medium sized manufacturing firms simply haven't got hundreds of thousands of pounds to shell out on the latest enterprise (ERP) software suite. Thankfully though, it's not always the most sophisticated software that brings in the most impressive results.

Skyforce Avionics, a subsidiary of Honeywell International, designs and manufactures portable navigation systems for the aerospace industry. Established in 1990, the company is based in Boxgrove, near Chichester in a converted farmhouse with 5,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

The business is lean and efficient in every sense of the words. The fact that 22 employees will this year be able to turn over a staggering £2.5 million shows the firm is performing well. But it's not always been like this.

Managing Director at Skyforce, Mel White, comments "our business was growing fast and we needed more control, we were running our business using software from Sage for financials and stock control. Because there was no material requirements' planning at this point inventory was back flushed which meant, in a batch manufacturing environment that Skyforce had poor forward build capability. Bills of material were becoming a problem; their products typically having 300 components could not be handled satisfactorily with the restriction of 10 links.

Another key requirement was lot traceability - Skyforce needed to be able to track exactly which batch and supplier a component came from. The company had been employing one person full time to manually assign lot number to batches of stock.

After researching the market for MRP products, they found the software from Innogistic had the breadth of functionality they required within their budget, and the decision to go ahead with Concept 3000 was an easy choice to make.

The first phase included stock control, BOM management, purchase order control, production management and MRP. Sales order processing followed later.

Since the initial installation of Concept 3000 there have been many improvements to the business. The best measure of its success is in stock accuracy. This figure was hovering around the mid 70's per cent before Concept 3000 - its now better than 98%.and we have seen a corresponding improvement in our working capital. That's



not all though. White says there has also been headcount savings of 25% over the past four years as a result of the new software.

Recent developments have included developing with Innogistic a much better engineering interface, which now allows engineers to capture data from the start of a programme and use Concept and its associated Explorer programme to control BOM's from initial concept through to production. "This has been a team effort between Innogistic and Skyforce that has allowed us to reduce development time on our latest product by at least 25% which is key factor in time to market".

Future plans include developing some of the reporting tools to allow us to better integrate our MRP and business forecasting model with the actual Sales Order Book. Overall Mel White "cannot speak to highly of the support level from Innogistic, both from their willingness to work with their customers and support them on a day to day basis".