

Timberjack streamlines operations with the help of IFS Applications™

The installation of IFS Applications™ at its global facilities was a central feature of Timberjack's long-term strategy to streamline its production and distribution processes. IFS Applications™ will provide a complete groupwide order-to-delivery process for forest machines, enabling increased flexibility, shorter lead times and lower production overheads. Smoother information exchange and simplified work routines are further benefits that will help Timberjack to maintain its position as the world's leading designer, manufacturer and distributor of purpose-built forest machines.



The problem

With operations extending from North America to Southeast Asia, Timberjack realized that major improvements could be achieved by installing a global information system. As it was, different systems were in use in different parts of the world, making information exchange unwieldy and work routines unnecessarily complex. The fact that the systems were not integrated meant that the same data were keyed in more than once, with the ensuing problems and the possibility that mistakes could be made. In

addition, the system did not allow design teams in Europe to communicate electronically with their counterparts in North America. An integrated system enabling Timberjack to link up its production facilities in Sweden, Finland, and North America with each other and with its Continental Distribution Centers in the Americas, Asia and Europe would save time, increase efficiency, and ultimately improve customer service.

The solution

Timberjack defined the specifications for the new system, with a detailed list of criteria that would have to be fulfilled by prospective suppliers. As Timberjack wanted a lasting relationship with its ERP provider, the financial position and vision of the suppliers were carefully examined. After running pilot studies on site, Timberjack selected IFS Applications™. The structure of IFS was clearly future oriented, with its agile component-based architecture. In particular, IFS/Product Configurator™ was an important factor in opting for IFS. As Lennart Jansson, global project manager, said: "IFS understood our business style. Our products are also component-based. With IFS you can choose whichever system, or combination of systems, you like."

Implementation

After 3 months the implementation at the plant in Birmingham, Alabama was complete. This was followed by the plants in Woodstock, Ontario, and Joensuu, Finland some months later. The projects were very intensive, with the "target constantly moving", as Lennart Jansson put it. However, as IFS project groups installed the system, it was always possible to discuss and tackle problems as they arose. Upgrading of the Filipstad, Sweden plant began in March 1999.

Benefits

IFS Applications™ will support Timberjack's global supply chain, resulting in better collaboration between its manufacturing units globally and standardized routines at all its sites. The whole chain, from suppliers, engineering and design, manufacturing, distribution to after sales, will now be handled with one common solution. The idea is to deal as much as possible with one source in order to get higher quality and homogeneity, which is very much in line with the way Timberjack deals with its own customers. In particular Timberjack insisted on installing the IFS/Product Configurator™, which will enable it to secure a correct flow of information from customers through the entire engineering and manufacturing process—all the way to delivery. As Lennart Jansson explains: "By ensuring that the correct rules for configuring our products are used in the sales situation we start off on the right foot from the very beginning". This means that everyday decisions will be based on accurate, real-time information. Lennart Jansson again: "The world we do business in is so dynamic that we can't afford to base our decisions on divergent information". In the future, there will be a web interface, which will allow customers to place their orders direct. These will then be processed, the place of manufacture identified, and the order will be sent to the factory. And throughout the whole process, information will only have to be entered once. A further benefit is the component-based architecture of IFS Applications™, which allows the system to grow and expand with the company. For users, an added benefit is the graphical interface.

Anyone familiar with a Windows environment can easily learn the system, saving time and expense in training. According to Lennart Jansson, IFS has managed to develop a system that does not feel difficult to handle, even after system upgrades. Based on the ERP platform provided by IFS Applications™, Timberjack can continue to expand and retain its position as the leading manufacturer of forest machines in the world.



Software

IFS Manufacturing™; IFS Distribution™; IFS Maintenance™; IFS Financials™, IFS/Document Management™; IFS/Product Configurator™; Warranty Management System™

Hardware

HP server

Workstations

HP PCs
Toshiba laptops