

## Eight-week implementation of full-scale ERP system saves leading steel producer time and money

By choosing IFS Fast Track™, Kohlswa Seriestål was able to install IFS Applications™, the component-based ERP system, in a previously unheard of implementation time of eight (8) weeks. By focusing on core business critical issues to optimize training, the system was implemented with minimum disruption of operations.



Kohlswa Seriestål now has a complete business solution which enables detailed production planning, immediate access to documentation, and involves employees at all levels in the day-to-day running of the factory. This will afford the company the benefits in time and money associated with more streamlined operations.

### **The Problem**

With a history of over 450 years, Kohlswa Seriestål is the leading producer of shell molded steel castings in

Scandinavia, producing components for a broad spectrum of business sectors in Europe, the USA and Asia. Up until the late 1990s the company had used a variety of proprietary and custom-built systems to run its everyday operations. As the company expanded, however, it became apparent that a new ERP system was needed. As Håkan Porthén, president of Kohlswa Seriestål, comments: “The old system could only tell us about the current status. In principle, it was impossible to use it for production planning.” The new system would be required to enable production planning, allow for real-time access to documentation, and, not least, be able to handle the very special processes involved in the production of steel castings at Kohlswa Seriestål. In addition, the system would have to be Year 2000 compliant.

### **The Solution**

After an exhaustive selection process during which Kohlswa Seriestål developed and refined its requirements, the final choice went to IFS, in November 1998. The outstanding functionality was one determining factor. IFS also displayed a clear understanding of the industry. “I was very impressed by the IFS consultant. After only five hours at the plant, he had completely grasped our situation,” states Håkan Porthén. Finally, as Kohlswa Seriestål was growing, it was important that the system be installed as quickly as possible. Again, IFS was up to the challenge. Using IFS Fast Track™, the system could be up and running in as little as eight weeks.

## Implementation

Careful, detailed planning, focusing on business critical processes, is the core concept in IFS Fast Track™. First, IFS consultants spent a week at Kohlswa Seriestål analyzing the company's business processes in a pilot study.

Implementation proper was begun in January 1999. By emphasizing core issues, the IFS project team was able to radically reduce the learning load for the end-users.

The first phase of the implementation – basic training – took just one week. Here the IFS consultants went through the basic processes in the system. During the next three weeks the users at Kohlswa Seriestål put the theory into practice, training and developing their proficiency and getting used to the routines. During this period IFS consultants were available if needed, but the main focus of the period was on the end-users' familiarizing themselves with the system. At the end of this phase, a test was run to monitor the skills of the users. Here again, the benefits of focusing on business-critical processes became apparent. The IFS consultants monitored the test run but the actual test was performed by the users at Kohlswa Seriestål. The result was a complete success.

The following two weeks were spent feeding basic data into the system and converting customer-specific basic data. Once again this work was done in principle by the personnel at Kohlswa Seriestål.

By week seven the system was ready to be tested in a real production environment. Focusing on critical issues, real processes were run through the system. The system was then reset using the back-up function, thereby testing that as well. On March 7, 1999, eight working weeks after the project began, the system went live.

## Benefits

One major benefit of IFS Fast Track™ is that disruption of operations is minimized. With an implementation time of weeks rather than months, both time and money are saved. The intensity of the training period also serves to maintain the pace and ambition of the project. As Thomas Lindblom, project manager at Kohlswa Seriestål, puts it: "The short implementation time makes it much easier to maintain employee enthusiasm".



Moreover, as the framework is set, there are no changes during the implementation process, which means that no unnecessary adaptations have to be made during the project. Later, when the system is in place, it is much easier to identify needs and make the changes required. Added to these are the full benefits of IFS Applications™: planning and documentation will be greatly improved, purchasing routines will be streamlined, and the net requirements functionality will monitor needs automatically, resulting in fewer bottlenecks and less waste of material in the most critical production processes. Håkan Porthén concludes: "Until now, we have had no real overview of our operations. IFS Applications™ will provide that, giving us much more control over what we do." IFS Applications™ will allow Kohlswa Seriestål to view change as an opportunity rather than a threat.

## Software

IFS Manufacturing™, IFS Financials™, IFS Distribution™

## Additional software planned

IFS/Time Reporting™

## Hardware

PC NT platform