

MCS-rm Helps Addacabin Build an Agile Business



Customer: Addacabin Ltd
Web: www.addacabin.co.uk
Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Rental and sales of temporary and permanent accommodation

Products:

- MCS-rm (7 users) with:
 - Business Intelligence
 - Purchase Order Processing
 - Repair & Maintenance

Benefits:

- Increased efficiency through centralised storage of critical information
- Invoice run times dramatically reduced – from a week to half a day
- A system which is easy to learn and use
- Wide-ranging automation frees valuable time

“MCS-rm is brilliant. Today, instead of important information being scattered across different files or being kept in people’s heads, it’s all wrapped up in one place.”

Richard Norman, IT Manager

“With MCS-rm now so much a part of our business, I really couldn’t imagine going back to the old way of doing things.”

Susan Forbes, Credit Control Manager

Now approaching its fortieth year, Addacabin Ltd is a leading supplier of temporary and permanent accommodation, with products ranging from small secure storage units to multi-storey linked cabins. A member of the Thomas Mitchell Group of Companies, the company operates out of Kirkcaldy in Fife. The business has expanded steadily over the years until today it has fourteen employees and a turnover of £6 million.

The Challenge

The Addacabin team works hard to retain its well deserved reputation for dependable, responsive service. Credit Control Manager Susan Forbes explains, *“We pride ourselves on prompt, trouble-free on-site delivery and construction of the customers’ accommodation. Sometimes, the deadlines they give us can be quite challenging, and we need to be flexible in meeting requirements.”*

Until four years ago, Addacabin operated a labour-intensive, mainly paper-based system to handle customer orders. This was very time-consuming, as Susan remembers, *“Take the typical example of a customer calling to place a repeat order: we couldn’t give them a price on the spot. Instead, we used to rummage through cards, paper and spreadsheets to find out what price we’d charged last time. There were scribbles everywhere! We wasted hours trying to pull the information together, which affected our ability to respond quickly to our customers.”*

Furthermore, when the time came to invoice, this, too, was a slow, unwieldy process: *“With our old invoicing system, we had to laboriously copy data in from*

previous invoices. It could take us up to a week to do the invoice run.”

The Solution

Recognising that its growing business would benefit from a fresh approach, in summer 2006 Addacabin began to review possible replacement technology. Not surprisingly, automated invoicing for both the rental and sales sides of the business was high on the list of required functionality.

A senior manager had had previous experience of using an MCS system and had been impressed by its performance. Addacabin met the MCS team, saw the MCS-rm rental software solution in action and was satisfied it would be a good fit with the business. As a result, the company purchased a solution comprising MCS-rm for seven users, with modules for Business Intelligence, Purchase Order Processing and Repair and Maintenance.

By September 2006, the system had gone live. Looking back, Addacabin IT Manager Richard Norman notes, *“It all went smoothly right from the very first run and, in fact, the MCS-rm implementation proved to be the easiest I’ve ever experienced. MCS provided excellent support throughout.”*



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The Benefits

Susan highlights some of the practical – and radical – differences the system has made, “MCS-rm is brilliant. Today, instead of important information being scattered across different files or being kept in people’s heads, it’s all wrapped up in one place. Our records are centralised and correctly maintained. MCS-rm gives us quick access to all our records, and equips us to readily respond to customers’ queries. For example, at the touch of a button, we are able to go into our records and check the history of our cabins. The time saved on processing the monthly invoice run alone is phenomenal. With MCS-rm, we’ve managed to cut it down from one week of preparation to just half a day!”

The Purchase Order Processing module helps Addacabin to efficiently process orders to suppliers, such as the hauliers who manage delivery and the engineers who erect the cabins on customer site.

Susan is also clear about the wider business benefits of MCS-rm: “With staff no longer having to write up records of customer calls and transactions by hand or hunt through files for critical information, we’ve been able to invest the time saved back into the business. We’ve developed new procedures that help us to run a sharp, agile operation.”

Staff can log notes on the system against accommodation out on hire, for example if there’s a problem with a cabin or the customer has requested modifications a few months into the hire period. This provides a centralised, accurate record of cabin status.

As well as the MCS-rm system meeting day-to-day requirements, the Business Intelligence module enables the accounts department to generate management reports.

The fact that MCS is Microsoft Windows based, with a familiar look and feel, had been a point in its favour during the selection process. Subsequently, Addacabin staff have found it straightforward to learn and use. Susan adds, “When we log onto the system, we have the option to choose a live or test environment, and the test system has proved to be hugely beneficial for training staff and implementing new procedures. It’s good to be able to try something new without worrying about introducing risks into the business. Contrast that with the old days, where everything was handwritten – if staff made a mistake, it all had to be redone.”

Susan is delighted with the support provided over the years by MCS. “We’ve built up a great working relationship with the MCS helpdesk, who are fantastic. I’ve

always been able to contact them with any queries and they come straight back to us. Obviously, as time goes on and our confidence increases, we require less direct support and I tend to use the excellent online resources available through the MCS ‘Customer Club’. But it’s good to know that help will always be there at the end of the phone should we need it.”

The Future

Addacabin recognises that there are still elements of MCS-rm that it has yet to explore fully. Susan reviews the current state of play, “The system has done an outstanding job on the invoicing side. With MCS-rm now so much a part of our business, I really couldn’t imagine going back to the old way of doing things. In the months ahead, we plan to extend our use to help us to manage our hire fleet, including repairs and maintenance. All the functionality is there and we look forward to deploying it, with the continuing support of MCS.”

For more information;

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