

ULVAC Technologies

Enhancing Global Competitiveness with Visibility ERP



Company Facts

Overview

- »Location: Methuen, MA
- »Industry: Vacuum Technology
- »Website: ULVAC.com

Success Highlights

Challenges

- »To enhance its global competitiveness
- »Flexibly optimize its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), efficiency, and foreign currency transactions.

Solution

- »Visibility ERP

Benefits

- »Improved productivity by 25% with less effort
- »Save hundreds of thousands of dollars per year
- »Track revenue and cost in real-time
- »Eliminated manual conversion to dollars and back again.
- »Ability to streamline a number of other internal processes
- »Flexibility to create custom user-defined fields to track anything necessary
- »Faster, more flexible and internal control



To enhance its global competitiveness, ULVAC Technologies sought to flexibly optimize its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), efficiency, and foreign currency transactions. The Massachusetts-based manufacturer and distributor of high-tech, vacuum-related equipment and components for a range of industries, a subsidiary of ULVAC Inc. of Japan, had outgrown its previous ERP system.

“We required faster, more flexible, internal control than our previous ERP system offered, brought on by a need to be Japanese Sabanes-Oxley compliant,” says Dave Sackett, CFO of ULVAC Technologies. “Waiting until month-end reporting was finished to get our month-end revenues and costs was no longer good enough. We also wanted to streamline a number of other internal processes.”

According to Sackett, the company required a new ERP system that could be quickly and cost effectively implemented with minimal IT staff or support. “We couldn’t wait years or spend millions of dollars to fully implement a new ERP system at various locations,” says Sackett. “For the type of work we do, we needed high function at a low cost.”



The company challenged a number of small to large ERP providers to demonstrate their systems. “We gave them a list of our requirements, which included the flexibility to create custom user-defined fields to track anything we wanted, such as a warranty start date,” says Sackett.

After the vendors competed head to head, ULVAC chose the best overall performer, a fully integrated ERP system for complex and mixed-mode product manufacturers called Visibility ERP from the Massachusetts and UK-based developer, Visibility Corporation. As an enterprise class application designed from the ground up on Microsoft .NET architecture, it supports Oracle and Microsoft SQL Server databases, and is designed as a browser based application.

Optimizing Business Processes

“We have full ERP functionality at about one-tenth the cost of a big ERP system with Visibility ERP - without needing all the consulting, programming, staffing, licensing, hardware or maintenance,” says Sackett, who implemented the ERP system at ULVAC Technologies’ U.S. headquarters and for remote users across the U.S.

According to Sackett, the ERP implementation was easy. “We did it in about a third the time it typically takes to implement a larger ERP system.” He says he was able to finish implementation within a year, as staff was trained as needed.

“We have the data we need to improve our processes from finances, sales, and manufacturing to inventory, engineering, and customer service,” says Sackett. “We have improved productivity about 25 percent with less effort, and are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.”

“Generating corporate month end financial reports now takes about 5% of the time it did with the previous ERP system,” adds Sackett. More importantly, it enables real-time financial reporting, the company no longer has to wait until the end of the month to receive an accurate corporate financial snapshot.

“We can track revenue and cost in real-time, even down to the work order level with Visibility ERP,” says Sackett. “We know which jobs are making us money, which aren’t, and can take corrective action much faster. We can run a report at any time to track our margin and make any necessary adjustments in mark up. We can find problems before they happen, which helps with profitability.”

Within Visibility ERP, ULVAC created a quote database to track and prioritize their best sales opportunities. “Anyone with access to the quote database can see what customers are quoted, what quotes are pending, what the anticipated margin is, and can rank quote opportunities,” says Sackett. “It helps us to better plan our resources and act on our best opportunities.

“Customer reorders are also streamlined by an ability to look up the order history by typing any available customer information. In fact, access to needed data - from price lists, parts lists, and bills of materials to contracts and tool specifications - is much more readily available company-wide,” according to Sackett. “If a customer’s shop floor operator needs a replacement pump, but only has part of the model number and an approximate purchase date, we can find the data needed to reorder without having to go to an inventory manager,” says Sackett. “Everyone has access to the data they need when they need it, so we’re doing far better with inventory planning.”



One of the ways ULVAC Technologies is benefiting from Visibility ERP is by streamlining its foreign currency transactions. Since it has a Japanese parent company, recording transactions in Japanese yen was required. With the previous ERP system, however, this was cumbersome.

“We used to manually convert everything to dollars and then calculate exchange gains using corporate rates,” says Sackett. “Now we can do transactions in yen. Eliminating manual conversion to dollars and back again streamlines the process, saves hours per day, and makes corporate auditing much simpler for our parent company.”

According to Sackett, the company’s engineering department also saw major improvements as a result of the new ERP system. Instead

of keying in every field as was previously done, its engineers can simply export data from their CAD software into Visibility ERP. Expense reporting turnaround time has also been reduced from weeks to days, since Visibility ERP has eliminated the need for hard copy records for expense reporting.

“Employees can start an expense report online, upload their receipts against the report, and the system automates the process with supervisor approvals,” says Sackett. In addition, he points out that instead of using relatively costly preprinted forms, employees can print the required forms (i.e. quotes, invoices, checks, packing lists, sales orders, etc.) as needed, saving about \$0.25 per form.

ULVAC is now implementing Visibility Customer Server, a web-based

customer self-service solution. This will enable ULVAC’s customers to log into a private portal, place orders, check on order status, and more. ULVAC also plans on implementing Visibility’s Vendor Server which provides a collaborative web-based connection with suppliers by providing vendor management access via a web portal. This will reduce procurement costs, improve response time, and shorten order cycle time by managing the RFQ process, purchase order entries, supplier quote assessments, comprehensive workflows, and document management.

“We’re working smarter and more productively with Visibility ERP, and this will only continue as its flexibility allows us to streamline more of our business processes,” concludes Sackett.


About Visibility

Visibility Corporation is a solutions company working towards the singular goal of enabling our manufacturing customers to achieve operational excellence. We provide a modern, flexible, fully integrated enterprise resource planning solution designed specifically for manufacturers of complex products. Our more than 30 years of experience with our customers’ unique requirements in the manufacturing industry are built into our Visibility ERP solution. We develop, implement, and support Visibility ERP ourselves, eliminating 3rd parties. We embrace and excel at customizations because we believe your ERP solution should work for your business, not the other way around. As a family owned and operated business, we treat our customers as a part of our family. With a deep understanding of the manufacturing industry, Visibility ERP provides manufacturers with visibility into their business operations, allowing for enhanced performance and increased profits. It’s a simple solution for complex manufacturers. For more information, [connect with Visibility](#) or visit www.visibility.com.



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