QuickWorks MRP
Manufacturing Control

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QuickWorks
Manufacturing Control Software

What is QuickWorks?

QuickWorks is an uncomplicated, low cost manufacturing control system for dynamic manufacturers. It is the simple alternative to spreadsheets (prone to errors) and overly complex ERP/MRP software (expensive, overhead hungry and slow to use).

What is our vision?

We are passionate about helping small and medium sized manufacturing businesses to grow in a controlled and sustainable manner. We will do this by providing businesses with a manufacturing control system that delivers control and visibility, whilst being easy to use, affordable and agile.

Why did we decide to develop a system?

Having worked with over 100 manufacturing SMEs, it became clear that one of the key blockers to growth was that businesses lacked an effective and appropriate manufacturing system. This was acutely evident for smaller manufacturers that were trying to move away from a task orientated micro-management style of control towards developing a management team that could take ownership of their functions.

Furthermore, this is painted on a backdrop of the increasing need to automate elements of the quality system, especially traceability, as compliance standards become ever more stringent.

We believe smaller manufacturing businesses need a different solution to larger businesses. We also believe a system should enable the business - not constrain it.

Why are some SMEs not investing in a manufacturing system?

There were several reasons why businesses were reluctant to invest in a manufacturing control system.

Although some companies have taken the plunge to invest in an MRP/ERP system, albeit typically when they have a management team in place, from a survey carried out by us in 2018/19, we discovered the following potential barriers to purchasing a system;

System Skills

➔ Being able to specify a system
➔ Being able to use a system

Costs

➔ The upfront costs
➔ Future escalations in maintenance charges

Time

➔ Implementation time, particularly the time to enter data and train people
➔ Maintaining the system (i.e. inputting data)

Complexity

➔ Having to do things that do not add real value to the business
➔ Reports are not what they want and are difficult/costly to change

Flexibility

➔ Unable to deal with constant changes.
➔ Production plan changes generating a lot of paper and consuming a great deal of time, especially when plans are changing daily or even hourly

Risk

➔ Waste of time and money, if the system is not suitable
➔ Ability to migrate easily to another system in the future, when the business has grown

So, what have we done about it?

In order to maximise the opportunity, we have designed the system to accommodate the fundamental challenges and the potential blockers, the details of which are given below;

Addressing Fundamental Challenges

We have created an uncomplicated manufacturing system that specifically addresses the concerns of small/medium sized manufacturing companies and facilitates the transition to functional ownership (i.e. providing the information and visibility to allow decisions to be made by the most appropriate people in the business, without losing control). Specifically, the key features of QuickWorks include;

a) There is no need to create manufacturing plans. Consequently, there is no requirement to print off plans, distribute them and constantly update them. QuickWorks is able to handle ever changing priorities and communicate them instantly, without the need for formal manufacturing plans

b) The innovative dashboard gives everyone in the business the visibility to see what needs to be done throughout the whole business process, from enquiry through to cash collection. This allows the MD to hand over tasks to other people without losing control, so that they can spend more time on the strategic challenges of growing the business and securing the future.

c) QuickWorks has built in traceability, NCRs and customer configurable Certificates of Conformity, thus automating significant elements of the quality system.

*Many people are aware of the difference between a "push" (e.g. MRP – Materials Requirements Planning) approach to materials and a "pull" (e.g. Kanban) approach. This new approach to manufacturing control systems effectively does the same for information in the business. It allows information and priorities to be pulled from the point of use. We call it **MRP3 – Manufacturing Responsive Pull.***

Alleviating Potential Blockers

We have responded to the potential blockers in the following ways;

A Straightforward System

✓ The system is a standard package designed to satisfy the needs of small/medium sized manufacturing businesses. There is no need to either specify or configure it.
✓ The system does not require system skills. QuickWorks is intuitive and training can be done on the job.

Low Cost

✓ There are no upfront costs
✓ We charge a monthly rental, using a pricing structure that is fixed for as long as the company continues to use the system (i.e. no price increases). We take the view that the earlier adopters should benefit from providing us with their feedback.
✓ We will continue to develop the system, based on the priorities set by our customers, and we will offer these upgrades free of charge.

Save Time

✓ We have designed the system with routines to import customer, supplier and stock record details, using excel spreadsheet templates.
✓ The system has been designed to be "out of the box", so it is a standard product requiring little training. This training will be delivered using video and slide shows built into the system, accessible at the point of use
✓ The built-in automation of functions and traceability minimises administration time.
✓ Shop floor display screens communicate priorities instantaneous without the need for paper.

Increasing Flexibility

✓ The system is "To do" list based. Any changes in priorities instantly update the "To do" lists, which can be visible on shop floor screens.
✓ Screens can be configured differently, to reflect the information required in a specific area.

Reduce Complexity

✓ With few "must enter" fields, the customer decides the level of complexity they require for their business
✓ There are some built in standard reports. However, the customer can export data in excel format to create whatever reports they need in a format to suit their own business.

Minimise Risk

✓ If the system is not suitable, the financial commitment is only one month's rent.
✓ Should a customer wish to migrate to another system downstream, we will facilitate this by enabling them to export the data in a spreadsheet format.

How will this help manufacturing businesses?

QuickWorks sits between manual systems/spreadsheets and traditional MRP/ERP systems. By clearly identifying the needs of this sector, we have developed QuickWorks to have the following differentiation;

How is QuickWorks better than manual systems/spreadsheets?

Like many MRP/ERP systems, QuickWorks brings control. It can help resolve the following issues;

✓ The month starts slowly and the end of the month is a nightmare
✓ High overtime, particularly at the end of the month
✓ Always chasing where jobs are
✓ Duplicate purchase orders or forgetting to order materials
✓ Late deliveries to customers
✓ Lost and/or wasted material
✓ Late deliveries from suppliers
✓ Late invoicing and poor cash collection
✓ Poor internal communications, particularly about the status of jobs
✓ Poor control of parts going to subcontract

How is QuickWorks better than other MRP/ERP systems?

Where QuickWorks differs from other MRP/ERP systems is that it brings a unique combination of **visibility**, **flexibility**, **empowerment** and **risk reduction**, which are key factors for small/medium sized manufacturing businesses.

Greater Visibility

✓ The action-based dashboard allows everyone to see the status of enquiries, jobs, purchase orders, sub-contract, invoices, pods, etc.
✓ The work to lists, which can be customised, are able to be displayed on screens throughout the business
✓ As QuickWorks provides instantaneous updates, verbal and written communications, particularly the need for meetings and telephone calls, can be reduced significantly.

Improved Flexibility

✓ Only enter what you need to. There are very few mandatory fields. QuickWorks can be as simple or as complex as you wish
✓ Do things in the order that you want to (e.g. you can place a sales order on the system, before you create the part you are making)
✓ No need to issue manufacturing plans (or constantly update them)
✓ Generate and configure your own reports easily

Empowerment

✓ Enable the MD to spend more time working on the business (e.g. strategy and business growth) rather than working in it
✓ Create the environment for everyone to take ownership of their function.
✓ Delegate tasks easily, without losing control
✓ Improve morale and employee engagement

Lower Risk

✓ Low cost – no upfront costs.
✓ Low monthly rental
✓ The contract commitment is for the rental period only (i.e. one month)
✓ Increase and reduce the number of seats with only one month's notice
✓ Get up and running quickly by Importing your data at the front end (e.g. customer and supplier details)
✓ Receive all updates free of charge
✓ Have a say in future improvements to the system, by giving feedback
✓ Automatically comply with key elements of your customers' quality systems, including traceability
✓ If you to move to another system downstream, export your data in csv/excel files, so you can migrate with the minimum of fuss.