

Witham Case Study

Case Study: How Odoo helped Witham scale by 60%

Witham Group, a leading UK supplier of lubricants, oils, paints, and related products, has been serving industries such as automotive, agriculture, and manufacturing since 1921. With operations spanning multiple depots in Lincoln and Soham, Witham offers a diverse range of products, including bulk oil distribution and tailored solutions.

Witham Group proudly holds a Royal Warrant, a prestigious recognition granted by the British Royal Family. This honour underscores Witham's unwavering commitment to quality, reliability, and excellence in its products and services. Awarded for consistently meeting the highest standards of craftsmanship and customer service, the Royal Warrant reflects Witham's reputation as a trusted supplier across industries. This accolade reinforces the company's dedication to innovation and delivering premium solutions to its diverse clientele, maintaining a legacy of excellence established over a century ago.

The Challenge

Witham were previously using Microsoft Dynamics AX, however this was being phased out and replaced by Dynamics 365, prompting Witham Group to evaluate their options. The primary driver for the change was cost, as upgrading to Dynamics 365 presented a significantly higher financial commitment compared to implementing Odoo. Odoo offered a more affordable yet comprehensive ERP solution, aligning with Witham's requirements for scalability and functionality. By choosing Odoo, Witham not only avoided the prohibitive costs of transitioning to Dynamics 365 but also gained a flexible platform tailored to their operational needs.

Witham Group faced several challenges across their operations:

- **Data Management:** Disconnected legacy systems and manual processes created inefficiencies and data silos.
- **Inventory Management:** Managing stock by weight and volume across multiple depots was complex and error-prone.
- **Sales Processes:** Handling bespoke orders, pricing, and trade agreements manually led to errors and inefficiencies.
- **Manufacturing:** Specialised blending processes lacked automation, slowing production and quality control.
- **Delivery and Invoicing:** Manual proof-of-delivery and invoicing processes caused delays and inaccuracies.

To address these challenges, Witham sought an ERP solution that could unify operations, improve data visibility, and enhance efficiency.

The Solution

Smart IT implemented Odoo ERP, tailoring its modules to address Witham's unique requirements:

- **Multi-Company Setup:** Odoo was configured for Witham's multi-site operations, with customised user permissions and depot-specific settings.
- **Accounting & Financial Integration:** The Odoo Accounting App was configured to handle multiple currencies (EUR, NZD, USD), FIFO inventory valuation, and a custom solution for scrap stock handling. Witham's VAT management process was simplified, with features to handle postponed VAT and automated price list recalculations.
- **Sales & Order Management:** Odoo's Sales App was configured to streamline the ordering process. New fields were introduced to track special pricing, sales reps, and trade agreements. Automated processes were set up to handle proof of delivery (PoD), invoicing, and price overrides, reducing the manual work involved in billing and improving invoicing accuracy.
- **Inventory & Warehouse Management:** Odoo's Inventory App was customised to track products by both weight and volume, with barcode scanning integrated for efficient stock management. A new field was added to prevent stock from going negative, and stock reservation logic was refined to ensure that only whole barrels were reserved for orders.
- **Manufacturing & Production Automation:** Odoo was developed to streamline Witham's blending process, automating batch tracking, temperature controls, and quality checks. A new field was added to track the scales used in the blending process, and batch numbers were automatically allocated to finished products. Additionally, Witham's paint mixing orders were integrated into Odoo with simplified manufacturing orders.
- **Reporting & Business Intelligence:** Smart IT provided training to enable Witham to develop custom Power BI reports using Odoo's database relationships, ensuring they could access real-time data for better decision-making.
- **Data Migration & System Integration:** The transition from Witham's legacy AX system to Odoo was handled smoothly, with a detailed plan for data migration, including stock balances, customer data, and product records. This ensured continuity in operations post-implementation.
- **Automation of MSDS Sheets:** The automation of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) involves integrating systems to generate, store, and manage safety documentation seamlessly. This ensures that essential safety data—such as product composition, handling guidelines, and hazard details—is automatically linked to relevant inventory and sales processes. By automating MSDS, Witham Group reduced manual data entry, minimised errors, and ensured compliance with regulatory standards, streamlining distribution to customers with every order.
- **Sales Order Planning:** Sales order planning enhancements allowed Witham to optimize order management. Automated workflows aligned inventory availability, manufacturing schedules, and delivery timelines, ensuring accurate order fulfillment. This functionality improved efficiency by prioritising orders, adjusting production schedules dynamically,

and reducing lead times. Together, these features empowered Witham to manage complex sales demands while maintaining high customer satisfaction levels.

The Results

The successful implementation of Odoo ERP had a transformative impact on Witham Group's operations. The streamlined processes, real-time data access, and enhanced functionality across departments led to significant improvements in both efficiency and decision-making.

Key outcomes of the ERP implementation included:

- **Improved Operational Efficiency:** The integration of Odoo across various departments such as sales, inventory, manufacturing, and finance helped eliminate manual processes, reducing errors and saving valuable time.
- **Enhanced Data Visibility and Reporting:** With better insights into key business metrics, Witham was able to make more informed decisions, optimise their inventory management, and improve customer service.
- **Scalable Operations:** As Witham grew its white-label sales arm, the flexibility of Odoo allowed the business to handle increased order volumes without requiring additional resources or staffing.
- **Increased Profitability:** The improvements in sales processes, inventory management, and cost control allowed Witham to boost profitability while maintaining operational efficiency.

The implementation of Odoo was a key enabler for Witham Group's continued success, supporting both operational growth and strategic initiatives.

Conclusion

The successful implementation of Odoo ERP by Smart IT had a transformative impact on Witham Group's operations. The streamlined processes, real-time data access, and enhanced functionality across departments led to significant improvements in both efficiency and decision-making.

The implementation of Odoo was a key enabler for Witham Group's continued success, supporting operational, financial and strategic growth.