

MADE SMARTER

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Digital transformation drives £1m growth for Herefordshire steel business

A steel fabrication business in Herefordshire has increased its revenue by £1 million and boosted productivity by 40 per cent after joining the Made Smarter West Midlands programme.

Goldvale Steel Stockholders & Fabrications was set up in 1996 by Les Salt to specialise in all types of builder's steel, construction steel beams, universal beams and columns which are cut to any size.

All products are available painted, galvanised or powder coated to provide a range of mild steel products which can be fabricated to meet the requirements of their customers who are based in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Wales.

The business, which is based at Gooses Foot Industrial Estate in Kingstone, Hereford, was acquired by Leominster-based Thomas Panels & Profiles in 2024 who wanted to introduce digital technology to modernise all its systems.

Kieran Meredith-Kedward, General Manager at Goldvale Steel Stockholders & Fabrications, said: “From our point of view we were in a great position because we had no digital technology – emails were about as technical as we got. The sale of the business gave us new energy and motivation to modernise our systems.”

The Challenge

Every step of the process, from enquiries to dispatch, at Goldvale was mainly paper based. There needed to be greater traceability to take the business forward and meet their ambitions to secure higher revenue work and increase the skills of their staff.

The lack of technology was hampering the business since the workshop had the capacity to produce 100 tonnes each month, but its actual output was around 50 tonnes due to its inability to effectively manage stock purchasing and production levels.

Kieran had researched digital systems and one stood out – the industry-leading steel fabrication programme STRUMIS – to move Goldvale from manual, paper-based systems to a fully digital, data-driven manufacturing system.

Kieran contacted Herefordshire Growth Hub to find out if there were any grant opportunities and he was advised to contact Barry Jones at Made Smarter West Midlands.

Barry organised a visit to Goldvale along with Kieran Mara from the MTC, one of Made Smarter West Midlands' strategic partners.

A digital roadmap was put together and after agreeing that STRUMIS was the best option, Barry worked with the business to put forward a grant application towards its purchase.

Kieran Meredith-Kedward said: “We knew at the beginning that STRUMIS would be too powerful a programme for the size of our company, but with our growth targets and our potential, it would be perfect for us over time because it would help us lay the foundations to scale up rather than having to start from scratch.”

Barry Jones, Digital Transformation Specialist for Made Smarter West Midlands in Herefordshire, said: “We had long discussions around understanding the implementation application timeframes and to help the business be aware this was a digital journey and not a race.

“It has been a massive success. Goldvale's productivity levels have risen more quickly than was expected due to the buy-in of the staff and Kieran has really got hold of this project, shared information with colleagues and attracted new blood who are digitally savvy into the business to create the right balance between the existing workforce and the new members of staff.

“The business is now more attractive to potential employees because of their digital transformation.”

The Solution

The company successfully applied for a £20,000 grant towards the STRUMIS system and invested a further £55,000 themselves which included buying iPads for each member of staff in the workshop.

The STRUMIS Production Console software programme helps workshop staff provide digital records of all their work which can be from what material was used at the saw, drill, angle cropper or plasma cutter to who welded what beam and how long it took to weld.

Training was also extended from an initial two weeks to a further month so that everyone was up-to-speed with the new way of working.

Kieran Meredith-Kedward added: “We also wanted to understand our inventory because it is all cash that is tied up in the business.

“We knew we had the stock but we didn't always know where it was and that really helps when needing to know what to buy and being able to meet deadlines as well as costing for each order.”

Kieran Mara, Senior Advisor, Digital Transformation at the MTC, added: “When Kieran started at Goldvale 18 months ago he knew there was loads and loads of potential, but they were hampered by having mainly paper-based systems.

“Kieran and the senior management team were quick to identify that they needed to implement a management information system to streamline their back office and production processes.

“It has been a delight to return to see the terrific transformation Goldvale has made. Kieran and his team have worked incredibly hard over the last 12 months.”

The Benefits

Productivity and revenue have been increased by introducing the new ERP/MRP system.

In 2024 before STRUMIS was introduced, Goldvale's revenue was £2.5 million but that increased to £3.5 million last year and they are now aiming to reach £5 million in 2026.

Productivity has increased by 40 per cent which is higher than the original target and the administration department has doubled in size following the appointment of an operations assistant, an estimator, a general administrator and a draughtsman.

Kieran Meredith-Kedward said: “We want to continue to grow and are confident we will reach processing 100 tonnes a month in the workshop this year.

“Having the live data in all departments is crucial and will make us more competitive as well as being able to target different markets.”

The Future

Goldvale plans to recruit a further four production engineers to deal with their increasing order book.

Kieran Meredith-Kedward added: “The system has introduced traceability in terms of stock control to help with ordering and tracking where it is on site as well as the production process, and means we will soon be in a position to tender for more lucrative contracts.

“The next stage of implementation is the back room ordering to feed fully into the shop floor so that all departments are working together.

“STRUMIS is a powerful piece of kit which does everything that we want from the initial enquiry to ordering to production and delivery.

“It has become the backbone of our company. It was a brutal nine months initially to introduce it, but we are now all automated and jobs that took me three or four days are now taking 15 minutes.

“In a few years, we will likely be looking for a new facility because we are outgrowing this site.”



Barry Jones, Made Smarter; Kieran Meredith-Kedward, Goldvale Steel Stockholders & Fabrications; Kieran Mara, MTC

SUCCESS STORY