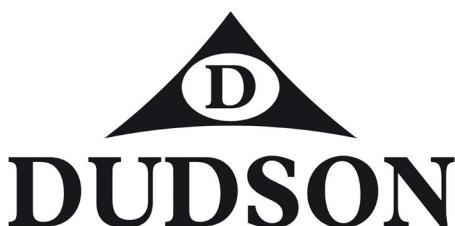


Dudson Group 'bowled over' after saving £26,000 per year with SYSPRO ERP

A world-leading ceramic tableware manufacturer and supplier is saving up to £26,000 a year in one process alone after reducing the time it spends on order fulfilment by automating its processes, and reports that this saving is an important part of achieving a return on investment on the whole project.

Dudson Group is using SYSPRO, an advanced enterprise resource planning (ERP) system from business solutions provider K3 Syspro (K3), which is seamlessly integrated with Microsoft Dynamics CRM. The system is being used worldwide at locations in the UK, USA, Canada, France, Australia and Spain, and is helping the company to monitor sales activity and performance more efficiently.

In a move to enhance the company's ERP investment even further, Dudson has implemented DataSwitch for easy and automatic communication of critical data between each respective site. This has enabled the company to reduce the time it spends on inter-company order processing from 230 people hours per month to just 30 hours per month; time that the company values at £26,000 per annum.



"Our estimate is that the global inter-company order processing consumed around 230 hours a month, but with DataSwitch, as part SYSPRO, this has been reduced to just 30 hours a month"

At a glance

Company

Dudson Group

Industry sector

Manufacture of ceramic products

Number of employees

400+

The challenge

- Enhance the investment in SYSPRO ERP
- Reduce time spent on order processing
- Eradicate the need for multiple keying of information which can lead to errors

Solution & services

- SYSPRO ERP
- DataSwitch
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Hosted Applications

The benefits

- Reduce time spent on order processing from 230 to 30 hours a month which is valued at £26k per annum
- Re-keying of information is no longer required
- The risk of human errors and typos has been eradicated
- Reduction in the amount of paperwork and administration tasks
- DataSwitch helps connect the Dudson group of companies together
- Business critical information is held securely in the K3 Cloud therefore business critical functions can be accessed anytime from any location.

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DataSwitch is a powerful data manipulation and systems integration tool which works with SYSPRO to streamline Dudson's sales processes. It eradicates the need for manual transfer of information from external sources such as Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) messages or database transactions. Instead, DataSwitch provides a user friendly interface that simplifies data import and export tasks and the automation of manual transactions. For example, a purchase order raised in one of the subsidiary companies automatically creates a sales order in the production department, and when that order is invoiced, stock is automatically transferred into a transit warehouse and is receipted into stock simply by entering an invoice reference. The invoice is posted automatically into accounts payable and inter-company trading imbalances are completely eradicated.

Ervin Davis, Strategic Support Director at Dudson Group, explains how DataSwitch is delivering savings across the board, *"Previous to the commissioning of SYSPRO worldwide, each centre would enter its own sales orders for the individual order fulfilment process. Purchase orders (POs) were keyed locally and transmitted by fax to our head office in the UK. The UK would then key sales orders for these purchase orders. On fulfilment, the overseas business centres would have to receipt manually, each line of the PO."*

"This was a time consuming system and multiple keying of information led to errors which impacted on customer service. Our estimate is that the global inter-company order processing consumed around 230 hours a month, but with DataSwitch, as part SYSPRO, this has been reduced to just 30 hours a month –that figure does not include the time it takes to key in the original customer sales order."

"DataSwitch is the link that has unlocked just as many benefits from an operational point of view, as SYSPRO itself. It sounds crazy because it is a small utility, but it brings huge functionality and savings in both time and money."

"The comparative small cost of purchasing DataSwitch has been repaid many times over. Without it we would be hugely disadvantaged."



With DataSwitch, Dudson staff only have to key data in once and in the majority of cases, this is generated automatically via SYSPRO's Materials Requirements Planning (MRP) function. There is no re-keying of information required up to the point that goods are received into the subsidiary company following delivery. Not only does this eradicate the risk of typos and human error, but it also reduces the amount of manual paperwork and administration that is required. Credit notes are no longer required because there is greater accuracy in the receipts that are created.

Ervin Davis continues: *"Once the sales orders have been inputted, there are two routes depending on the trigger allocated to the process in each Business Unit. In some cases DataSwitch produces a PO to mirror the sales order. This is transmitted automatically to the UK version of SYSPRO, which creates the sales order. Once the sales order is fulfilled and an invoice is created, DataSwitch moves the stock into inspection in the overseas Business Unit, updates the PO and posts the invoice into accounts payable. When the merchandise arrives it is moved by DataSwitch from inspection into the warehouse designated by the PO, simply by entering the invoice number into an Access utility."*



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"The other route would be for the sales order demand to be rolled up in MRP to create the purchase order, which is then treated the same as in the previous process. This requires the PO to be manually triggered for transmission, but produces fewer individual POs and sales orders. Overall, this inter-company process is saving the group up to £26,000 a year."

This saving is just one of the benefits that Dudson is experiencing by deploying DataSwitch together with integrating SYSPRO and its CRM solution. DataSwitch has become the user-friendly bridge that connects Dudson's group of companies together from a SYSPRO perspective. It has allowed the business to harness the power of process automation and unlock a number of additional efficiencies.

For example, DataSwitch is playing a major role by creating stock codes in all overseas Business Units from master information keyed and held in the UK. In the company's American unit, it moves stock and re-values it from the Duty Free warehouse into the Duty Paid warehouse, and creates sales orders where customer orders are received in a readable electronic format.

Ervin Davis says: *"DataSwitch has become an integral part of a self-developed despatch system which has been introduced to reduce workload and ease user frustration across the entire group. It facilitates another utility we have written to move stock from one warehouse to another, based on demand and availability."*

Further to streamlining the entire order process end-to-end, DataSwitch is also making it easier for Dudson to upload new data such as price lists and cost modifications complete with system validation. This means that staff in the company do not have to write data directly to SQL tables and the inherent dangers of this are eliminated. Furthermore, any errors appear immediately in the log and can be instantly corrected, later re-creating the transaction from the DataSwitch dashboard. The ability to send alerts from DataSwitch on failure or success also enables swift remedial action to be initiated.

An additional benefit of DataSwitch, and the integration between SYSPRO and CRM, is the fact that all of Dudson's business critical data is being held within the secure K3 cloud network by partner company K3 Hosting.



K3 Hosting supports SYSPRO, CRM, DataSwitch, Human Resource system Equator, Office applications and Exchange email and delivers it through a Citrix desktop, which allows Dudson access to business critical functions and additional hosted applications 24 hours a day, seven days a week for 365 days a year. These applications are delivered to Dudson's operating Business Units in the UK, USA, Australia and Spain, with K3 Hosting supporting a monthly usage of around 125-150 users.

For Dudson, this means that there is no need to have a large internal ERP resource in-house and the company benefits from disaster recovery and backup services on an ongoing basis. The company's business critical data is held safely and securely in K3's remote datacentres worldwide, and Dudson can access this when necessary.

Ervin Davis is in no doubt that DataSwitch has provided Dudson with benefits throughout the business. *"The comparative small cost of purchasing DataSwitch has been repaid many times over. Without it we would be hugely disadvantaged,"* he says.

"DataSwitch is the link that has unlocked just as many benefits from an operational point of view, as SYSPRO itself. It sounds crazy because it is a small utility, but it brings huge functionality and savings in both time and money. Any company that runs a multi-site operation with SYSPRO and has to process multiple transactions in sequence will find DataSwitch an invaluable tool."