



Simon Jersey

Simon Jersey keeps ahead of competition through business process improvement.

Simon Jersey is one of the leading specialist corporate wear companies supplying uniforms to business and industry worldwide. From small cafés to corporate giants, Simon Jersey caters for any size of organisation providing the best in uniform design, backed by an unrivalled level of service. Simon Jersey works with its customers to build brands and project corporate image.

With over 50,000 customers, call centres in four European countries, distributors in 25 countries and worldwide delivery, Simon Jersey is one of Europe's leading suppliers of bespoke and ready to wear corporate clothing. It has over 30 years' experience in supplying uniforms to, and supporting the brand perception of, companies such as Best Western, Village Hotels and Resorts and the National Health Service.

Over the last ten years turnover has doubled to nearly £30 million and today the company prides itself on its design led approach and deep understanding of the needs of varied work environments. It provides up to 10,000 product lines via an extensive colour catalogue and supplies more than 2.3 million garments each year. In 2002, German retail group Quelle, one of Europe's leading mail order companies, acquired Simon Jersey complementing its existing range of products, and creating a major pan European force in the clothing for work market.

Historically, most of Simon Jersey's competitors focused on providing either a catalogue-based or a tailored service. Simon Jersey does both and over the years has been well placed in the market thanks to the breadth of its product range. However competitors have since 'followed suit', and so today Simon Jersey is maintaining its competitive edge by providing its customers with a higher level of customised service.

Through its Managed Account Service Simon Jersey offers customers careful individual packing of products and courioring to staff all over the world - a huge logistical challenge. In some cases

corporates are even asking Simon Jersey to handle peoples' clothing budgets, and on occasion send alerts if a member of staff tries to purchase clothing beyond their budget.

All of this new tailored supply service has required a fundamental change to the company's operations, business processes and supporting IT infrastructure. But these changes are essential in order to handle new customer requirements, which is the fuel to the company's continued growth.

Since 1993, Simon Jersey's product range has doubled. Previously it had 5,000 product lines - each with up to eight different sizes; now there up to 10,000 lines, which means the company has a phenomenal 70,000 stock keeping units (SKUs) to manage.

Simon Jersey used to have a manufacturing plant in Lancashire but, in order to handle such a growth in its product portfolio, the company now relies entirely on the manufacturing expertise provided by 15 to 20 CMTs (cut, make and trim) companies, mostly based in Portugal and the Far East. Simon Jersey has therefore outsourced all production so that it can concentrate on being the preferred outsourced uniform supplier to its customers.

Typically there is a 13 week lead time from its CMTs and therefore to help with effective planning Simon Jersey has used business software designed specifically for the clothing industry. For the last 10 years it has utilised System21 enterprise resource planning software from Geac, a global enterprise software company for Business Performance Management. System21 offers the capability to hold product information in a multi-dimensional database to cater for different styles, colours, sizes and fits - ideal for handling Simon Jersey's requirement for 70,000 SKUs.



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Graham Entwistle, IT manager for Simon Jersey, said: "Geac software allows us to have the flexibility to adapt the software to cater for changing customer requirements, we spent significant time and resource in creating a platform unique to our needs. In hindsight this was a short-term solution. We've now been using the same version of software for the last eight years and we really need to move on in order to embrace our next phase of growth and the latest technologies available."

However instead of simply upgrading to the latest version of System21, Simon Jersey has taken the opportunity to take a wholehearted look at the business, through a new programme called Project Vision.

In November 2002, Simon Jersey's management team took time-out to review in detail the way it was running its business. 15 heads of departments spent the day conducting an off site review of the business and all its individual processes. Process workshops took place to look at the existing methods and decide how the company would ideally conduct these processes in the future. To assist, Simon Jersey used Geac's business process modelling tool - process.connect - to visually map out every business process.

Graham Entwistle, said: "It was very important to start by analysing the higher level processes and then work down from there. Otherwise it is difficult to keep track of the relevance of every process that you assess. In doing this thorough review we soon realised that every process required an awful lot of supporting information, which all needed communicating to different people. We have a few hundred low level processes which we've now mapped and produced a DOMAIN document, which stands for data, objective, measurement, activity, involvement and narrative. I believe the five months we have invested to get this right will save enormous amounts of time when we start phase two and roll out the supporting IT infrastructure."

Phase two of Project Vision is anticipated to take six months and aims to go live in January 2004. This phase will involve Geac and Simon Jersey prototyping, testing and training end users in the

new processes and enhanced functionality offered by the latest edition of System21.

The new system will provide the company with entirely off-the-shelf, standard software, which contains no modifications. This will make it easy to upgrade to future releases of the software - such as System21 Aurora, as needs dictate.

The new version of the software will also offer users a web-based, customisable and intuitive single user interface and allow direct access to both Geac systems and other third party products that are deployed at Simon Jersey.

Another benefit of the new system will be the availability of an advanced forecasting system. This will be vital to ensure Simon Jersey's supply chain operates as cost effectively as possible, whilst meeting individual customer demands. It will be used to help manage demands for all 70,000 SKUs. There is a huge need to anticipate and forecast potential peaks in demand throughout the year, to enable Simon Jersey to take a proactive approach to purchasing and CMT production, so that it can maintain sufficient minimum stock holding levels. The quality of this information, which System21 provides, therefore allows staff to give customers guarantees on customer service levels.

It will also play a vital role in controlling sourcing costs. Currently the average lead time from placing orders with its regular CMTs to final delivery is 13 weeks. However if stock is not available, which could potentially mean Simon Jersey fails to meet a customer order, it uses local UK-based CMTs. Although these can supply garments in just six weeks there is a higher production cost. Hence greater visibility through the use of demand forecasting software will help to minimise the risk of incurring extra costs in the supply chain.

Graham Entwistle concluded: "Thanks to Geac's solutions we now have the platform in place for our future growth - not just in terms of advanced IT but also in-built flexibility to adapt business processes and, as a result, undertake real business performance improvements."