Marechal excels with EXO

A perfect view of stock levels by individual part means the electrical component business can be more flexible to customer demand…

Marechal Electric is a major French manufacturer of industrial electrical components for a wide variety of industries including mining, chemical, food and beverages, petrochemical, and oil and gas. After operating in Australia through a distributor for more than 30 years, in 2011 Marechal HQ decided to set up a wholly-owned Australian subsidiary. It began trading as Marechal Australia Pty Ltd a year later.

Looking for an integrated package

Subsequently, Marechal set out to find a robust accounting package to support its back office processes and deliver the kind of business intelligence it was used to, but it wanted one that would still be easy to use for a new and expanding staff.

John Coyne, CFO of Marechal Australia, explains, "We were trying to find a system that came with a full suite of modules, including payroll, on top of all the standard financial tools of course. But it seemed the only way we could get a fully integrated system was to purchase additional add-on modules and we didn't want to do that."

Then Marechal discovered MYOB EXO.

"I'd used MYOB Premier in a previous life and found it easy to get to grips with," says Coyne. I liked its integration with Excel too, and that was functionality we were keen to see in the new system. So we reasoned that MYOB EXO, being from the same MYOB stable, might have the same sort of attributes."

Marechal found that it did and, in fact, EXO met all its business requirements.

Matching the system with needs

To help set up EXO, Marechal turned to Clayton-based implementation business Bizpro, which kicked off the process with a comprehensive demonstration of the system.

"Seeing it in action really helped confirm our decision," says Coyne.

From there, it was a case of looking at Marechal's business requirements and assessing how best to meet those in EXO. In the end, very little customisation was needed.

The fact that there was no previous transaction data to import meant the implementation was probably simpler than many, admits Coyne.

"Still, deadlines were tight. Our initial meeting with Bizpro was in early February 2012, and we needed everything up and running by 23 March – in time for the start of trading a week later. That's a little over six weeks," says Coyne.

"Bizpro was impressive," he adds. "We hit our 2 April deadline without any major problems at all,

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Always knowing what's in stock

There were a couple of modifications that Marechal asked Bizpro to make in EXO. The first was to the bill of materials. Because there are lots of common parts between Marechal's items, most of the company's stock is held at component level and only assembled as a finished product when a customer places an order.

"For example, take an electrical socket," explains Coyne, "one may have two pins, the other three, but in all other aspects they're identical. By keeping them as components we're more flexible to customer demand – but only if we know exactly what's in stock at any one time.

"That's where EXO has really helped. Now when customers place an order for a finished product, our customer service reps can see straight away whether all the required components are in stock. Even if they're not, we can let the customer know there and then, and provide them with a revised delivery date.

"It took a little bit of setting up in EXO," says Coyne, "but it's proved hugely useful".

Keeping databases up-to-date

The other area that Marechal asked Bizpro to look at was 'quick insert templates', to help with data management.

"Our inventory isn't huge compared to some," says Coyne, "but with around 6000 separate items, it's large enough that when you have to make changes, you want to be able to deal with them in a fairly efficient manner. That's where quick insert templates come in.

"Say we introduce a new range and within that, there are maybe a couple hundred individual component parts. By far the easiest way to add those to EXO is to create all the data in a grid in Excel and import the whole lot in one go. Same if we need to amend a number of products en masse. It's best to pull them out of EXO, modify them in Excel and import everything back in one sweep."

The quick insert templates essentially enable that bulk transfer to happen between EXO and Excel, and, according to Coyne, they save the company a lot of time.

EXO to Excel and back again

Most of the reports that Coyne and his colleagues at Marechal use in EXO are fairly standard – sales order reports, GL trial balance, modified aged receivables and so on. For really detailed analysis, however, they like to use Excel.

"I find that the easiest and most efficient way to report on specifics is to get a large, fairly detailed amount of data in a report in EXO and then dump that into an Excel pivot table," says Coyne.

"EXO's reports and the ability to export direct to Excel make that a straightforward process."

Simple, flexible and good for business

The system's ease of use has been a big plus point for Marechal, given that it was starting afresh in the region.

"While we could always have benefited from more training in the run up to launch, the truth is that many staff weren't on board until a few days before the system went live, so it just wouldn't have been possible," says Coyne.

At the end of the day, Marechal was looking for something that would give its team what they had before in terms of output, but be easy for people to use.

"EXO meets that requirement very well," says Coyne. "It's a flexible, integrated system that allows us to run the business effectively.

"We've been very happy with the way it has worked out and I would certainly recommend EXO to other people contemplating a new system," he adds. ❧

CASE STUDY//

Marechal Australia

AT A GLANCE//

INDUSTRY
- Manufacturing

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE
- A new accounting package with strong business intelligence capabilities.
- Ability to track stock at the component level.
- Easy to learn and use.

SOLUTION
- MYOB EXO with professional services provided by Bizpro

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Increased flexibility to fill customer orders thanks to component-level reporting.
- More accurate details of parts availability leading to improved customer satisfaction.
- Strong business intelligence capabilities, including the ability to import and export to Excel.

FOR MORE INFO//

MYOB ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS

Australia
1300 555 110
exo@myob.com.au
www.myob.com.au/enterprise

New Zealand
0800 696 239
exo@myob.co.nz
www.myob.co.nz/enterprise

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