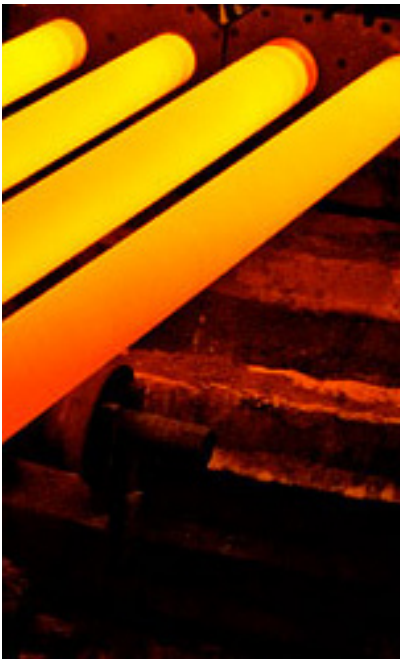


## Case Study

## United Cast Bar



Business management solution matches specific needs of cast iron bar manufacturer.

### The brief

United Cast Bar is the largest producer of continuous cast iron bar in the world. Part of the BI Group plc, they have twelve subsidiary companies across Europe and can claim to hold some 60 per cent of the world market for their sector. With rapid growth over the previous three years they needed systems which would enable them to manage the business while still having the functionality taken for granted in the metal trading sector.

cast traceability, UCB were sceptical about any system not developed for their industry being able to match their expectations. “It didn’t help that over the two years since we first installed Microsoft Dynamics NAV, our requirements have grown substantially” remarks Peter, “our company’s growing fast and the systems have to keep up.”

Technology Management worked with the staff at UCB to develop a complete picture of the ideal solution, working through a detailed specification of the processes UCB followed and building a solution to facilitate the workflow.

### Project Definition

“We wanted to make all the processes as simple and straightforward as possible,” says Peter Stones, UCB’s project manager, “our sales team need to be talking to our customers rather than struggling with a computer system. We needed a system to help them every step of the way.”

### Development and Testing

With the development process underway, UCB were consulted at regular intervals. Peter explains: “Technology Management kept us informed and showed us the progress at every step. We were able to provide feedback early in the process, resulting in the solution being tuned to our exact needs. We were made fully aware of what we would

Combining usability with the issues specific to metal companies, such as selling products by weight, size and

Focus	Cast Iron Bar Manufacture
Software	Microsoft Dynamics NAV
Users	36

*'The results in efficiency and customer service have proved we made the right decision'*

Peter Stones, Project Manager

## Case Study

need to do for a successful implementation very early on.”

Testing the new system with live data was possible because a full conversion of data from UCB's previous system was done two months before Microsoft Dynamics NAV went live. This, combined with a regular system walk-through with the project team, made sure the system matched UCB's requirements. Testing also identified unplanned enhancements that were easily incorporated at the early stages of the project.

### Training

A full training analysis was undertaken to assess each member of staff's training needs. A training programme was undertaken for the four weeks proceeding go live, covering the basics of Microsoft Dynamics NAV through to the complexities of sophisticated report writing. Each staff trainee was regularly reassessed to make sure skill gaps were covered.

Training on 'nearly live' data resulted in a better understanding of how the system worked. Indeed the trainer regularly came back with suggestions for improvements, many of which, once reviewed, were immediately incorporated into the solution by the developers.

### Fast Deployment

“We finished processing on the old system on Friday morning,” remembers Peter, “Technology Management had converted the data by lunchtime and after we had put our new stock-take and cast analysis results in, we were ready to go.” Technology Management's consultants stayed on site for the first few days to make sure everyone was happy with the way the system worked. “We couldn't believe it had gone so smoothly, the disruption was minimal.

### Ongoing Improvement

Continuous improvement is practiced not just in manufacturing but in all areas of UCB, so it was no surprise when a few weeks later they suggested streamlining another area of Microsoft Dynamics NAV.

“If it gives us an edge over our competition or makes it easier for staff to serve customers we'll do it” says Peter. “Technology Management gives us practical advice about the best approach, then lets us make the commercial decision about whether it's worth doing. The results in efficiency and customer service have proved we made the right decision.”



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