

SYSPRO Helps to Evolve Life and Science with Fisher Scientific

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■ The Company

Fisher Scientific International Inc., headquartered in Portsmouth, NH, is a world-wide leader in the design, manufacturing and sales of the highest quality life science and analytical products. The company produces thousands of lines of specialty and state-of-the-art laboratory products for the clinical, research and industrial markets. Fisher Scientific's products basically fall into three categories: Clinical Diagnostics, Labware and Life Sciences, and Laboratory Equipment. With annual revenues exceeding one billion dollars, Fisher Scientific's rapid growth has come from several fronts. Sales have grown as a result of rising worldwide expenditures on medical research and the demand for more sophisticated medical instrumentation and lab supplies to improve the speed, accuracy and cost-containment of the research and diagnostic testing. Fisher Scientific has also grown through worldwide acquisition.

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Today, Fisher Scientific consists of more than 50 different companies located around the globe. The majority of these companies can be classified as small- to mid-size manufacturing businesses (SMB), with unit sales typically ranging from \$3 million to \$200 million. While many of the Fisher Scientific International companies are single-site operations, some are characterized by multiple facilities. Additionally, many of the companies employ diverse manufacturing methodologies. Some units make and engineer product to order, while others build product to stock based upon sales forecasts. Still others employ a combination of methodologies, or what can be characterized as "mixed-mode" manufacturing.

■ The Challenge

The diversity of companies falling under the Fisher Scientific International umbrella continues to be a challenge to effective corporate management. While each Fisher Scientific unit operates as an independent entity, the Fisher Scientific management team realizes that corporate control and economies of scale are necessary to enhance corporate profits, maximize operations, enhance quality and improve customer service. In an effort to facilitate proactive corporate decision-making, boost overall corporate efficiency and quality, and maximize customer service, the management team established common corporate software standards – ones that could eventually be adopted by all Fisher Scientific units. It was felt that software uniformity would facilitate efficiency as well as cost-containment. It would also streamline employee training, minimize the impact of employee turnover and ease software maintenance by Fisher Scientific's IT department. In addition, standardized software would produce uniform data and reports, as well as provide the ability to generate customized reports – all necessary to maximize corporate control and decision-making. Moreover, common software standards would enhance management's ability to conduct sophisticated research on sales and market trends.

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■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Fisher Scientific International Inc.

INDUSTRY

Medical Device Manufacturing





■ The Solution

Jerry Bean, Fisher Scientific's Corporate Director of MIS, faced the challenge of selecting software that would meet the highly diversified needs of the various Fisher Scientific International units. After extensive research, he selected a software solution that was currently being successfully utilized by two Fisher Scientific units. He chose Microsoft's SQL Server 2000 platform and SYSPRO enterprise software offered through SYSPRO reseller Sutton Software, Inc.

While Fisher Scientific International is a "billion dollar company," many of the company's 50+ units fall into the small- to mid-range manufacturing category, with individual sales ranging from \$3 to \$200 million. The choice of SYSPRO enterprise business software was partly based on the fact that the solution is designed for single and multi-site units in the small- to mid-range manufacturing category. Bean's choice was also based on the SYSPRO ability to handle all the diverse manufacturing methodologies employed by different Fisher Scientific units. The software easily accommodates: make-to-stock; make-to-order; engineer-to-order and mixed-mode manufacturing. Additionally, the software features full accounting functionality and supports the high volume distribution requirements characteristic of many of the units. Bean also considered the global nature of Fisher Scientific's operations and the fact that SYSPRO translates to French and Spanish, as well as English.

■ The Result

While all Fisher Scientific units face similar challenges, i.e., inventory control, meeting targeted delivery dates and rigid quality control, many have unique needs. The wide variety of modules within the SYSPRO solution helps to accommodate both the general and specialized software needs of the units in their ongoing production of quality laboratory equipment and supplies. For example, SYSPRO's Materials Requirements Planning enables the units to create realistic purchasing and production schedules and identify capacity constraints.

Modules such as Return Material Authorization and Return to Vendor enable the units to enhance customer service by facilitating the return of units and parts. Many of the units employ SYSPRO's Engineering Change Control module to

meet specific customer requirements. The module tracks engineering changes, so the units can easily produce earlier product versions to meet the specific needs of customers using those versions. In addition, Fisher Scientific units are able to enhance quality control with the SYSPRO Lot Traceability Module. Because the module allows lots to be traced by both stock and lot numbers, both upwards and downwards, from source component lots to sub-assemblies and final assembly, the units have the ability to maximize quality control through the tracking and replacement of any defective materials. While the extensive functionality inherent in the SYSPRO Inventory Control module helps to maximize stock levels, units also employ the multiple levels of structures and routings available in the SYSPRO Bill of Materials module to help ensure inventory availability at phases in the manufacturing process. In addition, because SYSPRO supports bar coding, this technology is an important asset in enabling units with high inventory levels to track and control inventory. Trial kitting is yet another way some units are able to determine sufficient inventory or sub-assemblies exist to make completed product.

Mary Ann Garnish, Fisher Scientific Business Systems Senior Project Manager, reports that the adoption of SYSPRO as one of the common corporate software standards has resulted in increasingly rapid implementation. In fact, she notes that some units have been up and running on SYSPRO in as few as five weeks. Moreover, she reports greatly reduced employee training time.

Additionally, Garnish says that the choice of Microsoft SQL Server as the standard database engine helps to ensure data integrity and is also facilitating the use of data warehousing. Thanks to the ability to drill down in the SQL database, Fisher Scientific's IT department is currently building data warehouses that will enable corporate management to better analyze sales data and become increasingly efficient on many fronts. Additionally, says Garnish, the user-friendly nature of both SYSPRO and SQL facilitates the customization of software screens to suit the needs of units, departments and the more than 100 individual users within Fisher Scientific currently working with SYSPRO.