

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

MEET

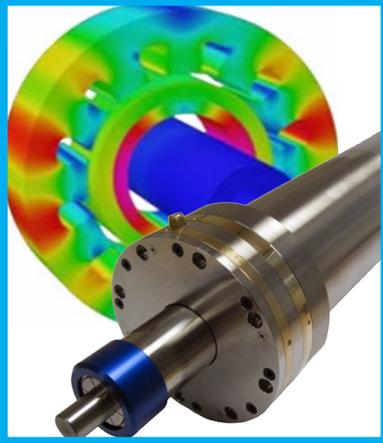


Who: Air Bearings Limited (ABL)

What: High-precision products manufacturer

Where: Poole, Dorset, UK

Web: www.airbearings.co.uk



Headquartered in the UK, Air Bearings Limited (ABL) is a leading manufacturer of air bearings solutions and other high-precision products. Since 1993, the company has been meeting some of the world's toughest engineering challenges by managing every stage in the production process - from analysis and design through to manufacture and assembly. Renowned for their customer-driven initiatives, the company boasts the latest software analysis tools and a state-of-the-art CNC machining center in Poole. Their expertise has been recognized at the highest level, with ABL a 3-time recipient of the prestigious Queen's Award for excellence.

It was continuous growth and expansion that led ABL to move forward in the industry and today, after considerable investment in both operations and staffing, the company boasts a 4600m² purpose-built manufacturing facility on the South coast of England, employing close to 100 highly skilled employees. With anticipated year-end revenues of £6,000,000, ABL has since been purchased by market leader, Via Mechanics Ltd., a parent company with manufacturing based in the UK, facilities in China and Japan and a worldwide network of sales offices.

Challenge: Surface customer needs and pain points

To better manage their operations, customer service and zero in on the customer experience, ABL knew they had to invest in a reliable business management solution. For years, they relied solely on an in-house, Excel-based management system to run their business. Once product range and output increased, the system became too labour intensive, difficult to maintain and consumed valuable time and resources.

ABL faced numerous operational challenges, namely in generating a viable BOM (Bill of Materials) and work orders, costings and creating materials purchase lists. With endless logistics problems, reams of data and their current system's inability to integrate data throughout the organization, raw materials management became slow and cumbersome.

Intensive market research and reviewing several business management solutions, led the ABL management team to Priority Software. "We knew we had to better serve our customers and run a leaner, more efficient business," comments Gary Durrant, Supply Chain Director at ABL. "After checking out the ERP market and really comparing the benefits of various solutions, our decision was clear – and we went with Priority. That was 8 years ago – and since then, we've never looked back!"

Solution: System openness, interoperability and flexibility

The project management team quickly got to work, starting with a thorough needs analysis to pinpoint problem areas in ABL's manufacturing workflow. This was followed by an in-depth look into ABL's administrative and manufacturing processes to recommend the most efficient modules mix. But it was the software's advanced data migration tools that made transferring ABL data from its older systems – virtually seamless. "Implementation and integration was quick and easy with very little downtime. Our staff of over 40 Priority users, were up and running in no time at all. Even learning the system was a breeze – more than user-friendly, we just caught on fast," remembers Durrant.

Once installed on site, Priority brought ABL a truly unique alternative to the weighty, cumbersome ERP systems offered by traditional vendors. It's Priority's system openness, interoperability and flexibility that leads to a fast learning curve, easy operation and quantifiable results in a significantly short time, generating reports to measure and monitor ABL's operational effectiveness.

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Gary Durrant, Supply Chain Director, ABL

*ABL is supported by our valued Priority partner, Medatech UK
(www.medatech.com)*

Results: ROI and tangible value – 20% improvement!

In the early months after implementing Priority, ABL managers could literally see a difference in their operations. **There was a 20% improvement in on-time deliveries, matched with a significant reduction in inventory, which meant considerable cost-savings across the board.** "Priority gave us the tools we needed to really manage and control every aspect of our business. For the first time, we now had accurate costing data at our fingertips," comments Durrant. "This is where business efficiency starts and Priority helped us get there," he added.

More recently, to keep pace with their growing business, ABL upgraded their Priority ERP, implementing new modules and functionality into their manufacturing processes to compete in today's market. Priority's manufacturing module includes native support for complete inventory management, dynamic replenishment, warehouse management, production planning and costing and financial accounting. For companies like ABL, delivering the right products quickly and retrieving real-time information about product specifications and configurations, spare parts and equipment maintenance requests, schedules and costs, was key to their running leaner and more importantly, increasing their bottom line.

With the UK's manufacturing industry on the rise and new initiatives set by local and global governments, ABL are on the fast track to success. "We could not have asked for better support than from Priority's local UK partner, especially during our staff training and now, with their dedicated customer support," comments Durrant. "Would we recommend Priority ERP to our colleagues in the industry? Without a doubt!" he said.

