



Vesper Marine sails through MRP (Manufacturing Resource Planning) challenges with SAP Business One®



At a Glance

The Challenges

- ⊙ MRP bottleneck barrier to expansion of product lines and sales volumes
- ⊙ Distributed supply chain problematic for forward planning
- ⊙ Significant growth overwhelmed existing MYOB financial solution

The Solution

- ⊙ SAP Business One® application
- ⊙ REALTECH implementation services & on-going support

Key Benefits

- ⊙ Vesper Marine can add more products and support more sales for a global competitive edge
- ⊙ Automated processes allow them to expand without associated administrative overheads
- ⊙ SAP Business One's scalability gives significant scope for implementing further business functionality.
- ⊙ REALTECH provides specialist development services.

Vesper Marine's market-leading maritime collision avoidance systems are fast becoming a 'must have' for ocean-going vessels of all sizes. To help manage a huge uptake in sales and an increasingly complex manufacturing process - based on specialised components and assemblies from around the world - Auckland-based Vesper Marine implements SAP Business One.

Skyrocketing sales

Jeff Robbins, CEO and co-founder, started Vesper Marine in 2007 to address a gap in the market for easy-to-use and accurate ocean-going collision avoidance systems. "Safety at sea is critical," he says. "But with all of the advances in Automatic Identification System (AIS), Global Positioning System (GPS), mobile networks and active LED displays, nobody had brought all of these technologies together into a commercially-viable product. So we set up Vesper Marine to do just that."

When they introduced their first product, it was relatively easy for Vesper Marine to ensure that they had all the components they needed on hand for assembly. But as

mariners realised that Vesper's proprietary AIS transponders represented the most advanced technology on the seven seas, sales skyrocketed.

Vesper expanded their product line in response to demand. "Customers asked for more advanced functionality, wi-fi interoperability, multiple display options and even more features," explains Robbins. "Keep in mind that our WatchMate AIS transponders are not simple units...they contain literally thousands of components and assemblies that we source from suppliers around the globe. Every item is critical. If we are lacking just one part, we can't ship the unit."

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- Jeff Robbins, CEO and co-founder, Vesper Marine

MRP bottleneck

They quickly realised that their manufacturing and assembly processes couldn't match their growth. "We had a MRP (Manufacturing Resource Planning) pain point," says Robbins, "so we started to look at specialist MRP software. We rely on a global network of suppliers with different currencies and different lead times for deliveries. All of these variables had to be taken into account if we were to be able to keep enough stock on hand to satisfy user demand."

"At the same time," continues Robbins, "we were outgrowing our MYOB financial system that we had acquired at start-up. As we looked at various MRP point solutions we realised that tight integration with financials wasn't a priority for them. But it was to us. We came to the conclusion that we needed a scalable ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system that encompassed both MRP and financials."

Enter SAP Business One and REALTECH

Vesper adjusted their search criteria and, after talking with colleagues and reviewing their options, identified SAP Business One as a potential solution. "We started talking with Vesper," says Tim Charman, SAP Business Development Manager with REALTECH's Business One division, "and agreed that SAP Business One would be the perfect fit for them. In addition, they had technical skills in-house that would be valuable during the implementation of Business One. We could work with them to achieve a shorter implementation timeframe".

Vesper Marine made the decision to purchase SAP Business One as their MRP/ERP solution and selected REALTECH as their implementation partner.

Winning approach

"We liked REALTECH's approach," says Robbins. After core training REALTECH were asked to step back and leave Vesper to explore and learn the full potential of SAP Business One through extensive testing. Robbins explains "The key point is that SAP Business One had all of the capabilities we required".

Vesper Marine had a well-defined pathway. "We first set up our general ledger and transaction database," says Robbins.

"Following the money is paramount in any business. We set a date for going live and worked towards it. We had a bit of a learning curve as we worked with the system, but once we had everything humming, no one wanted to go back. In retrospect, we should have made the jump earlier in the game."

Financials to MRP

Once they had the financials under control, Vesper worked out how they wanted to use the MRP functionality to best effect. "It actually only took us two months," says Robbins. "By then we had enough expertise to make MRP work well, within our specific business requirements. We can now fulfil existing orders, maintain enough stock and keep enough components in the pipeline to satisfy anticipated demand."

Next up is combining financials with MRP for more accurate modelling of future cash flows. "After the general implementation we went back to REALTECH to assist with some development for this project," explains Robbins. "While we can do a lot of things ourselves, the REALTECH team is absolutely top-notch and we already have a close working relationship with them so it's a logical allocation of resources. We expect to have some models up and running in the near future."

Sustainable growth

Vesper Marine sells their AIS transponders around the world and has a global network of distributors and partners. "We couldn't have grown this fast or expanded our reach so far without a solid ERP foundation," concludes Robbins. "SAP Business One has given us the tools and REALTECH has provided the expertise. This combination has enabled us to take our business to the next level and beyond."

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Vesper Marine

Headquartered in the heart of New Zealand's marine industry, Vesper Marine is dedicated to creating marine safety products with technically superior features. Vesper Marine's product engineers and customer support technicians focus on design excellence and after-sales support while their ISO 9001:2008 accredited manufacturing facility ensures robust performance. When sailors buy a Vesper Marine product, they can be certain it's 100% best-of-breed and that they'll receive outstanding technical support both before and after installation.