



| case study |

Caligen Cuts Costs for Competitiveness



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Jonathan Frankish, HR manager, Caligen

Caligen Foam Limited, part of the British Vita group of companies, is a manufacturer of polyurethane foam. Based in Accrington, near Manchester, Caligen supplies high-quality foam to companies in a wide range of industry areas, including automotive, medical, footwear and hygiene. Employing a total of 220 people, it has annual revenues of some £25 million.

Caligen offers one of the most comprehensive foam manufacture and application services in Europe. Quality of service is one of the company's major differentiators, but cost containment is also a major element in its competitive strategy. Because it competes with companies located in countries such as Brazil and the Czech Republic, where labour costs are low, cost reduction is among the top priorities for every department. Over the past few years, Caligen has made substantial progress in streamlining and automating its internal processes.

These priorities are shared by the company's IT function, which maintains a close focus on the

efficiency and cost-effectiveness of its systems and applications. Caligen is a long-standing user of software from Topaz. After using Topaz's Kismet payroll solution for several years, it migrated to Topaz EMS, which is a fully integrated solution covering both payroll and human resources (HR) management. The company's first priority was to implement the Topaz EMS Payroll module, which is currently used to manage the remuneration of its entire workforce.

On the HR management side, Caligen has installed the Personnel Management, Benefits Management, Vehicle Management and Expenses Management modules of Topaz EMS. These modules provide comprehensive management capabilities for personnel information, benefits and expenses. The Expenses Management module was customised by Topaz for Caligen's specific use. It is used to make weekly expense payments using BACS transfer, with the employee's bank details being imported automatically from the Payroll module.



Company

- Caligen Foam Limited

Business

- Manufacture of polyurethane foam

Software solution

- Topaz EMS

Benefits

- Reduced costs
- Streamlined, efficient internal processes
- Elimination of paperwork
- Prompt expense payments for improved employee satisfaction

The Topaz solution is also fully integrated with Caligen's Mitrefinch TMS time and attendance solution. Time and attendance data can be imported directly from this solution into the Topaz EMS Payroll module, eliminating the need for payroll staff to re-key information relating to hours worked.

Major efficiency improvements

According to Caligen's HR manager, Jonathan Frankish, the use of Topaz EMS has led to more streamlined internal processes together with major efficiency improvements.

"In the past, payroll processing took three man-days each week," he said. "With Topaz EMS, it takes just over a day. These time savings translate directly into reduced costs."

The system cuts down on paperwork and resources in various different ways, for example by generating and printing P11D forms automatically for the Inland Revenue. In the near future, Topaz will be helping Caligen to set up a system for electronic submission of Inland Revenue forms using eFiling and the receiving and updating of P6 and P9 data. Payments to third parties such as pension providers and local authorities have also been automated for improved efficiency. At the same time, the system contributes to increased employee satisfaction through ensuring prompt and accurate payment of expenses.

According to Frankish, the efficiency of Caligen's payroll function and the quality of the Topaz software have attracted the attention of other companies in the group. Recently, Caligen took over the payroll requirements of one of its sister companies, Kay-Metzeler, which employs 450 people. Again, this has resulted in an increase in efficiency, with one person now doing the work previously done by two. The same arrangement may be extended to another company in the British Vita group in the near future, adding another 80 people and building on the economies of scale already achieved.

An ongoing relationship

Frankish is very happy to see his company's relationship with Topaz continuing into the future. One of the factors contributing to the success of this relationship is the quality of the service and support received over the years.

"We are made to feel like valued customers, and Topaz is always ready to adapt its software to meet our requirements," said Frankish. "The Topaz support desk is also excellent, answering our queries promptly and pulling out all the stops when we need assistance in a hurry."

Frankish is also impressed by the annual updates that are made to the Topaz EMS system. Each update, he claims, brings valuable new functionality as well as features that make life easier for the user. Furthermore, implementation of the updated software is invariably smooth and trouble-free.

"As a payroll solution, Topaz EMS is comprehensive, modern and easy to use. From the HR perspective, we have not yet explored all the available functionality but Topaz EMS is clearly an excellent package. We are looking forward to benefiting from additional modules in the future," concluded Frankish. ■