

Implementation Made Fast and Easy

By Janet Weisel, B&L Account Executive

Most companies do not associate the words fast and easy with a software implementation. Read how one company did.

Multi-Cast Corporation is a 65 employee, non-ferrous foundry located in Wauseon, Ohio. Founded in 1946, Multi-Cast has built a reputation for quality aluminum and brass castings. Multi-Cast's philosophy is to invest in their plant and equipment that enables them to produce the highest quality castings in the most efficient way. Multi-Cast offers its customers high or low volume, large and complex, or small and simple castings.

The Challenge

Prior to implementing B&L's Odyssey ERP software, Multi-Cast had to deal with many challenges associated with its aging system. Technical support for the software and technology was limited. Data extraction was time consuming mainly due to the need to custom program reports. Throughout the organization, manual tasks and lack of data visibility hindered efficiency and communications.

According to Josh Stollar, Multi-Cast Casting Engineer & Implementation Leader, Multi-Cast's former system was cumbersome in day-to-day operations. "The system, while functional, did not have a Windows interface, which made it hard to use. While the system had all the information we needed, the information was stored in many different places."

Multi-Cast wanted a Windows based, integrated ERP system so that critical information was real-time and more accessible throughout their organization. Multi-Cast also identified key business-improvement goals:

- **Reduce Inventory**
- **Improve Customer Service**
- **Reduce Operating Expenses**
- **Access to real-time information**

Successful Implementation of New System

Data conversion was a critical element for Multi-Cast's implementation. This was no small task since the data was custom code on an AS400 running in System 36 mode. After the old system files were reviewed by Brenda Povlock, B&L Client Services Manager, it was quickly determined that data conversion was possible. Brenda then visited Multi-Cast for an in-depth review of their system's file structure and developed a conversion plan.

November 28, 2005, marked the beginning of the implementation of Odyssey. Multi-Cast immediately satisfied the top critical elements of a successful installation:

1. **Top management commitment**
2. **Assigned leadership the responsibly of implementing the software and gave them the time required to perform their tasks.**
3. **A positive "CAN DO" attitude by both Multi-Cast and B&L staff.**
4. **Openness to change.**

Without any one of these critical elements, their aggressive timeline for the implementation would not have been met. You see, Multi-Cast wanted to go live on January 2, 2006!

The initial kick-off meeting started with the group establishing timelines, determining who would be responsible for what activities, setting expectations, and most of all, they determined what modules would be implemented first to realize Multi-Cast's Phase I objectives. Jay Wigner, B&L Project Consultant, with the help of the B&L R&D Department, successfully converted Multi-Cast's data. He made two training trips as well as holding a couple of on-line training sessions with the Multi-Cast staff. **In just 25 working days, Multi-Cast went live** with Order Processing, Production Control, Shipping, Invoicing, G/L, and Scheduling & shop documents, meeting their Phase I goals.

Results with Immediate Impact

Implementation of the new system went smoothly, with the results being some fairly immediate and significant benefits.

"Prior to Odyssey, if a customer called regarding an order we had to direct the call to a person who knew or tell the customer we would call them back. In the meantime, we had to review stacks of paper to find their answer. With Odyssey, we can view a customer's order status on-line; no more looking through a file for an old shipper or invoice" says Stollar.

According to Stollar, to analyze data before Odyssey "We had to print a report from the old system, and then manually key the information into Excel. This was extremely time-consuming and easy to make mistakes." With Odyssey, one-click download to Excel is a time saving feature.

"With our old system there was no place to track inventory. We were blind to information on what inventory we had. Now, with Odyssey, we have the ability to track exactly what job we are working on, how long this job should take (compared to actual time collected), and exactly when it is finished. This inventory visibility will also help us with on-time deliveries."

Multi-Cast is excited about the new Odyssey system and its benefits. Their enthusiasm has not faltered as they head into Phase II of their implementation. Phase II will implement: A/P, Material Inventory, and Purchasing modules.

EDITORS NOTE: *Multi-Cast decided on a four-phase approach to implementing Odyssey.*



Multi-Cast Corp. implementation team from left to right: Alfredo Suarez, Robin Leininger, Joshua Stollar, Cliff Mullins, Mike Jewell, and Randy Vanier.