

Plantmark grows organically with Arrow

After two decades of rapid expansion, national wholesaler of environmental products Plantmark identified that its disparate range of technology platforms and programs was undermining its ability to maintain strong growth.

Business problem – one company with many IT systems

Plantmark is Australia's only integrated national wholesaler of green life and environmental products. Since 1984, Plantmark has grown to annual revenues of more than \$60 million with operations in all states of Australia as well as New Zealand.

Plantmark Managing Director and part owner Paul Tissot said that strong growth had created problems. "Over the years the business has grown both organically and through various acquisitions," he said.

"With each new acquisition came a new and different operating system – there were six different systems in total. As a consequence, none of the business units could 'talk' to each other and senior management was unable to pull together accurate and timely data on the performance of individual business units, or the organisation as a whole. Reporting, invoicing and stock control were a nightmare."

After recognising that the company had outgrown its existing financial system, Plantmark decided to undertake an urgent overhaul of its IT systems to ensure the business could continue to grow and operate efficiently. "It was obvious that the organisation needed one system that could handle MIS, accounting and operations, and cope with the demands of a rapidly growing business," said Mr. Tissot.

Technology solution – Arrow hits the mark for Plantmark

In the initial selection process, the Plantmark management team considered a number of different systems. After seeing a customised

demonstration of the Arrow system, delivered by Arrow business partner Evolution Business Systems (EBS), the Plantmark management team was impressed with the software and had confidence in both Arrow and EBS.

A major challenge was that a large part of the Plantmark business operated on a consignment business model. EBS assigned a dedicated team to implementing the Arrow solution on the Plantmark project.

"Working closely with Arrow and EBS ensured they were able to deliver a solution that added value to our organisation and met the specific needs of our business," said Mr. Tissot.

"The two groups worked very well together, EBS was equally committed to our success and this shone in their dedication to our project. Undaunted by the special requirements of our business, Arrow undertook significant customisation of its system specifically for our business."

A major concern for Plantmark's SELECT Cash and Carry division business was the volume of products moving through the market business every day.

In order to accurately record stock movement, Plantmark created different bar codes to identify similar or identical items that were arriving at the warehouse from various suppliers. As well as identifying individual supplier products, the new scanning technology records accurate stock levels and control.



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Managing Director,
Plantmark.

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Arrow accurately records stock movements as they occur, providing timely reports and statements for suppliers. Plantmark now emails fortnightly statements to suppliers accurately detailing stock movements and sales. This major step forward was made possible by Arrow software.

Mr. Tissot said the barcoded system had improved Plantmark's relationship with its suppliers dramatically through accurate tracking for stock control, pricing and supplier sales. "Since implementing the system, we have experienced more uptime than ever before and this is in a far more complex world," he said.

"The speed of processing is very timely, we have increased our capacity levels...our data is consistently accurate and delivered on time."

"The biggest benefit for our business was the implementation of the RF (Radio Frequency) scanner. Arrow built the integration technology between its software and the scanning software so that the two systems worked seamlessly - now management and staff share one view of the world. We couldn't run the SELECT Cash and Carry market business without these new scanning and recording capabilities."

Business benefits – powering growth through insight

Due to implementing the Arrow system, Plantmark now has much greater capabilities and a more efficient operating environment. The company's management team, staff and even customers are constantly coming up with new ideas for the business, using Arrow software, that save Plantmark and its customers time and money.

Mr. Tissot said Plantmark had benefitted greatly from the Arrow project. "Arrow has helped us improve our gross profit," he said.

"It gives us an accurate picture of the business in seconds. We used to have to wait weeks for this information. I'm very happy with our investment in Arrow and the work EBS has undertaken for our organisation."

"Without this system, we could not grow or expand our operations. I estimate our annual savings to fall in the ballpark of \$100,000 per annum, directly attributable to implementing Arrow."

The Arrow system has the capacity to grow with Plantmark, which expects to expand into four more markets in Australia within the coming two years.

"We can now see that the Allied Horticultural Hard Goods Business, our most recent acquisition, needs to be integrated into the Arrow system to allow us to gain a more holistic view of our operations and cross selling of products," said Mr. Tissot.

"We look forward to working on this new opportunity with EBS in the coming months. Due to their commitment and hard work, the system we have today works seamlessly. As a customer I was impressed by their commitment and ability."

"Arrow is a great size business for us; large enough to support the needs of its client base and not so large that smaller clients are neglected. Our experience with Arrow and EBS has been very positive. We would be happy to recommend them and, in fact, already have."



More about Evolution Business Systems...

Evolution Business Systems (EBS) is a leading Arrow Business Partner that sells, supports and implements the Arrow Financial Software product range. EBS also has expertise in using Crystal Reports and Microsoft SQL reporting tools to enhance data reporting and analysis.

EBS has a detailed implementation strategy that is tailored to customers in terms of timelines, requirements, risks and responsibilities as well as project variations and external requirements.

While it does not sell or support hardware or site network environments, EBS informally partners with selected specialists in these areas to provide clients with a "total solution".

'making it happen'

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