



How Delos lights the blue touch paper at ABRO

The company

ABRO is a Ministry of Defence (MOD) engineering service, repair and re-manufacturing organisation offering a worldwide capability to defence, emergency service and industry.

Capabilities range from small arms to battle tanks, from motorcycles to commercial fleet management, and binoculars to thermal imaging equipment. This range of products allows ABRO to uniquely offer customers a comprehensive repair and re-manufacturing solution.

A highly flexible, strategically sited workforce of 2100 ensures that ABRO is capable of meeting large-scale repair and overhaul requirements.

An unusually wide range of skills and expertise together with detailed knowledge allows ABRO to develop a service that consistently delivers total quality and value.

The challenge

ABRO was a Trading Fund of the MOD and as such was required to move away from being reliant on a third party supply chain and become self-sufficient.

In order to achieve this goal, ABRO needed to implement a system that would allow the business to use a single business system, enabling it to become even more efficient.

ABRO, through an organisation called CINCOM, bought an 'off the shelf' software package that was internally branded 'TABS' (The ABRO Business System), an ERP system designed to streamline materials management. Tim Stubbs, Master Scheduler based at ABRO's Donnington site said: "Throughout our six sites we had 17 different management information systems that were unable to talk to each other and were becoming unsupportable - our objective was to have one."

Stubbs continued: "The ABRO board approved rapid implementation of the new software, so the team had one year to develop processes and an additional year to roll the complete system out across our sites. The time parameter was very tight and even with the help of the CINCOM project manager the knowledge of the systems capabilities was limited. In order to speed up the process, departments were only taught elements of the software that were relevant to their role which meant that the system was not fully utilised. The result was that we weren't using the ERP correctly, and as such, we ran the risk of inaccurate data".

Having realised that a knowledge gap existed, the Delos Partnership was appointed to provide staff with a more detailed understanding of how an ERP system actually works and the benefits to be gained from its more extensive use.



How Delos met the challenge

ABRO approached Richard Watkins of The Delos Partnership and asked them to design a training program to meet their needs.



Tim Stubbs Master Scheduler

Stubbs said: "The Delos proposal was very specific to our requirements, it was flexible and it embedded ABRO issues into the training programme."

"Delos brought clarity to our ERP system as well as experience and knowledge."

Subsequently, Delos delivered a two-day training package targeting programme

managers. The first day concentrated on the basics of an ERP system and the second day was a practical workshop run by a few ABRO super-users who applied what they had learnt the previous day. This radically transformed the quality of the plans.

David Mather, ABRO's Operations Director said: "They lit the blue touch paper. The training sessions were simple and straightforward, allowing all levels to understand the principles of ERP. The best thing that they did was relate the practical education exercises to our business – so the delegates could really understand their individual roles within the system and the changes that were required.

"Their pitch is always targeted at their audience."

"They pitched their training to the exact level that was needed and it was received well by everyone who attended. People came away with a good understanding of how the CINCOM system should work and what each and everyone of them needed

to do in order to produce the best results. Most importantly, they inspired our people to look at things differently in order to get the most out of the system."

The results

ABRO is now beginning to work more efficiently as a business. All functions including materials management, order management and finance are now using the TABS system allowing everyone to use and act upon the same data.

This has produced the following results:

- Clear visibility of all areas of the business - ABRO can now respond to the supply chain within 24 hours rather than a previous two-week standard
- Reduction of inventory
- Controlled order book
- Estimated cash flow improvements of about £5 million and an 'additional loss avoidance' of approx. £2 million
- Accurate data
- Cultural change – increased awareness that accurate data provides accurate decisions.