



Surepharm Services Ltd

Complete pharmaceutical manufacturing and assembly for solid dose medicinal and healthcare products

Surepharm Services LTD, are a contract manufacturer for pharmaceutical products. The business makes hundreds of unique solid dose tablets and packs at any one time. Surepharm also provide technical services such as research and development and product development. The business is in their 25th year (2015) with 120 employees, situated in Burton upon Trent, UK.

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**Andrew Gardner,
Planning Manager**

The journey

The business had a bespoke MRP system which they still use today. Custom built 10+ years ago it was created through Microsoft Access, added to and modified over time. Andrew Gardner, Planning Manager for Surepharm, explains, “We have a database admin resource who develops our legacy system, he created a planning module, that’s when we first understood the need for a standalone system.” The MRP system worked but it wasn’t in depth and didn’t provide any visualisation or detail of planning and scheduling. Surepharm understood that to grow efficiency they needed an advanced planning and scheduling solution.

Andrew explains the main remit for the solution was to use a vendor who was familiar with the pharmaceutical industry and could handle 200-300 unique products going through at any one time. “The

systems we were looking at focused on one function, our constraints moved around from area to area, weekly and seasonally, we needed a dynamic solution. We understood that Access could provide us a system that would benefit us both now and into the future.” Because Access has previous experience working with the pharmaceutical industry, implementing a portfolio of systems and advanced production and scheduling solutions, it ticked all the requirement boxes for Surepharm’s growth plans.

The solution

The solution was advanced planning and scheduling system, Access Orchestrate. The key differentiator between other systems was Orchestrate’s visualisation and forecasting capabilities. Surepharm’s previous system was just a list of dates – there was no gant chart or visuals, there was no room for changes.

Industry	Pharmaceutical
Geographic	Staffordshire
Employees	120
Turnover	£10m+

Solution Access Orchestrate

“We’ve improved our planning and scheduling capacity by 75-80%. ”

Andrew Gardner,
Planning Manager

“This has changed with Orchestrate. We can now react quickly to changes and plan years in advance allowing us to forecast intelligently, based on real-time data. With Orchestrate we have greater management, control and visualisation over orders. This has improved production, as well as heightened morale and collaboration,” comments Andrew.

The implementation

Andrew adds, “The problem before implementation was that we were giving delivery dates out but weren’t sure if we were going to meet them. We needed Orchestrate as soon as possible. Starting the project in October 2012 we had finished the implementation by Spring 2013.

“The first thing was knowing exactly what we wanted. The plan was signed off, Access understood our needs and solved any issues we had surrounding the system’s introductory stages. We had to be rigid with our reasons for why we can’t have our planning system like everyone else including; works orders, quality links and a visible audit trail. These have to be created in our legacy system and integrated into Orchestrate.”

The Benefits

The pain points for the business were, delivery dates – getting them on time, customer service and stock management. “We wanted to make sure we weren’t under or over stocked or missing materials, we were flexible but we couldn’t

plan – we were always fighting, chasing orders. We didn’t have the visibility we required.

“Previously we never had a plan to follow,” comments Andrew. The organisation can now plan their production schedule around Orchestrate, feeding back into it and adjusting accordingly. He adds, “We can add standards and changes to production based on real-time updates in the solution.”

Following one consolidated plan has benefited everyone throughout the organisation. “We are now on top of our stock control, delivery on time and in full - we’ve improved our planning and scheduling capacity by 75-80%. We’re optimising all our resources, efficiently and effectively. We’ve got the foresight to react quicker. Access allows the business to see problems before they arrive, now our team can make informed decisions.”

The results

Andrew elaborates on the gains seen with Orchestrate, “The strongest results are now with our customer service. We no longer have customers asking us for order updates as they now have visibility over production. Our efficiencies on our packing has improved allowing us to use our labour more efficiently, as a result we’ve had an increase in output through throughput, we’re working smarter. With accurate data we can now reliably report and measure key performance indicators (KPIs) to improve management’s role.”



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About Access

We are a leading UK author of ERP solutions to the mid-market. Our customers are twice winners of The Manufacturer’s ‘ICT in Manufacturing’ awards and shortlisted for 2012, we help our customers achieve tangible return on their manufacturing system and operate lean manufacturing processes. Our product suite includes dedicated solutions for process and discrete production, including industry-specific requirements such as catchweights, variable yields and multiple units of measure.