

Keeping up with the Joneses on the smell of an oily rag

Farm machinery specialist JJ Ltd's Paul Jones says the company's PRONTO Xi ERP system is that rare beast, a 'set and forget' system...

If you're always on the phone to your business system provider and forking out for ongoing changes, it's a sign the relationship is simply not working. Efficient business systems should be silent partners, working quietly in the background without complaint.

Since installing the PRONTO Xi ERP system, in 1996, farm equipment supplier JJ Ltd has required minimal support from its business system software provider, Velocity Global, says general manager Paul Jones.

In fact, there have been a number of years in which JJ Ltd has not needed to call on Velocity for support at all. The savings on a system that you can set and forget are significant. Excluding a recent upgrade and some minor customisation, JJ Ltd has kept investment in its ERP system to the low monthly service fee.

"We chose to install PRONTO Xi for greater efficiencies, and a clear and accurate view of the business on a daily basis," says Jones.

"We haven't looked back. The system is extremely reliable and I wouldn't like to think what our business would be like if we didn't have it."

Complex business

What makes JJ Ltd's experience even more remarkable is the complexity of the company's business needs. One of New Zealand's leading farming equipment retailers and servicing operations, JJ Ltd is a complex business. It has an extensive parts division, high-value product sales, service workshops and used-product sales.

"We have 13,600 customers, 56 staff located in five different locations, a stock inventory of 61,000 farming machinery, equipment and parts, and a repair and

maintenance division, to service machinery and prepare used machinery for resale," says Jones.

"The nature our business demands that we have an accurate picture of the business at all times, seamless communication between divisions and total flexibility to change stock levels and ordering."

"If our system was unreliable the business would suffer. In our experience, PRONTO Xi is very reliable, and, on the whole, we really haven't had reason to need a lot of support from Velocity," he adds.

Over 13 years, PRONTO's ERP system has built up a comprehensive history of the company's business, products, services and customers, ensuring transparency and efficient sharing of information between sales, workshops, parts and accounts.

A key area where the ERP system has delivered significant benefit to the business is in managing the company's extensive stock inventory. With 61,000 line items housed at various locations, stock management and visibility is fundamental to running JJ Ltd efficiently.

"We need to keep tight controls on minimum and maximum stock levels, and the length of time we carry parts. We need to know where all parts are, and we also need system flexibility when external influences impact on the types of parts in demand," says Jones.

"With our PRONTO Xi system we have multiple re-order policies for line items and the flexibility to change them to support business requirements. For example, when we hit winter and anticipate that certain parts will break more often, the stock system changes minimum and maximum levels and other factors to reflect this. It means we can tightly manage our stock levels and alter them to suit changing times of year and other factors."



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Paul Jones, general manager



 **CASE STUDY**

> JJ Ltd, farm machinery specialists

 **AT A GLANCE**

Industry

> Agricultural services

Business Objective

> Company wanted an easy-to-use 'set and forget' ERP system that provided a clear, accurate view of the business.

Solution

> PRONTO Xi ERP, implemented by Velocity Global

Business Benefits

> System provides a clear, accurate view of what's happening on a daily basis, and is extremely reliable. Input is easy, and reporting is accurate and complete. Simple for staff to use, it also features a drill-down function allowing users to access information using a different range of fields.

 **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

> Velocity Global Ltd
Chris Morris
Phone +64 9 358 4445

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Easy to use

"It is essential for JJ Ltd that input is easy and reporting is accessible, accurate and complete. In these areas, PRONTO is excellent and it makes the business more efficient," says Jones.

"It's simple for our staff to use. It's fast and more efficient, but still captures all the required information. It has a great drill-down function, so you can easily access information using a range of different fields."

"For example, we only have two administration staff, but the area is run very efficiently. Because PRONTO tracks hours against products, stock levels, parts used, the status of warranties etc, we have all the information we need to make pricing decisions, bill customers, manage debtors and creditors, and have a clear picture of the general ledger."

Moving ahead

In 2000, Velocity implemented the specialist Workshop System for the company. This is a customised program in PRONTO Xi that captures time-sheet information for the service team, and correlates hours and internal costs to machines and service jobs.

"Workshop gives us complete visibility of work-

shop hours; hours spent on individual machines; the status of warranties and internal costs. It's an integral part of our system," says Jones.

Another cost saving for the company is that the latest release of PRONTO Xi, which Velocity has just finished implementing, has not needed any additional customisation to maintain functionality. The new version incorporates the customised functionality of the previous releases, through more sophisticated tools, and adds new features, but without requiring core modifications or a legion of programmers. This meant Velocity could upgrade JJ Ltd's system in just two weeks.

"Rather than delaying upgrades we can now benefit from the enhanced features of new releases as they come out without the cost of customising each version to our needs," says Jones.

"We've had PRONTO Xi for over 13 years now. It is fundamental to our running an efficient business and is a reliable system that we are very happy with. And the savings and efficiencies of a business system that you can rely on are considerable." 