CASE STUDY

Triumph in for the ride on its journey to ERP modernization

For over a century, Triumph's passion and innovation have shaped the evolution of the motorcycle, creating the UK's largest motorcycle manufacturer and a loved global brand. By embracing change and the new thinking it delivers, Triumph has modernized operations and revitalized its legendary brand, using the advanced functionality of Infor® LN and PTC Windchill. Never standing still, it continues to push and evolve, building iconic motorcycles that celebrate their past while embracing the future through bold design, original styling, purposeful engineering, and a genuine passion for the ride.

Triumph has partnered with Infor to embrace world-class business solutions. Stretching from the UK to Brazil, Thailand, and India, Triumph has brought its manufacturing, component, and assembly capabilities up to cutting-edge standards with a total ERP overhaul.

Triumph hits the road

Triumph motorcycles first began gaining recognition and sales nearly a century ago, when legendary actors and global icons such as Marlon Brando and Steven McQueen could be seen riding Triumph motorcycles in feature films. But today's highly volatile business landscape is a far cry from the simpler era of the 1950s and '60s. Now, real-world business efficiency and stellar accomplishments give brands time in the spotlight too, in addition to silver screen product placements.

Triumph knew that optimizing its complete manufacturing processes, from shop floor scheduling to board room strategies, was important for growth. With the help of Infor solutions, built especially for complex, discrete manufacturing, Triumph set out to perform a complete digital upgrade.

Triumph's road to modernization started with a strategic review that led the company toward a new range of modern classic bikes. At the same time, Triumph also identified the need for an overhaul of its engineering, manufacturing, and supply chain business processes.

TRIUMPH

Headquarters
Hinckley, United Kingdom

Manufacturing
UK, Thailand, India and Brazil

Industry
Motorcycle manufacturing

Employees
3,000

Operating revenue
£529.5m (2019)

Infor product
Infor LN

Website
triumphmotorcycles.com

"Over the years we've ended up with approximately 160 to 170 different systems that were serving various purposes within the business, our aim was to simplify our systems landscape to end up with a core, end-to-end system which supports most of the operational work for the business," says Triumph's COO, Jamie Looker.

Triumph's culture is one of innovation, passion, and determination, promising customers to "build your bike to your specifications." Triumph offers a Configurator web page allowing customers to configure their ideal bike from model, color, performance, styling, comfort options, packs, and accessories. These details are fed back into the manufacturing system to create a custom order with the dealer.

To address Triumph's current and future challenges, Looker said the key was making sure we have that agility to be able to enhance the system or develop to support our business needs of today, while also being able to support the business of the future, which is an environment that is everchanging…"

Stats:

- 35% of the bill of materials made internally
- 85% of motorcycles sold outside the UK
- 686 suppliers around the globe
- Sales in 63 countries
- Supports 700 franchise dealers

Why partner with Infor?

Triumph calls itself a cautious company and is accustomed to developing its systems internally. As such, the process of requesting and reviewing vendor proposals was challenging. Eventually, Infor was selected as the ERP vendor because of its flexibility and willingness to work to meet Triumph's agility needs, while providing co-development support into the longer term.

One of Triumph's strengths is its flexibility to change engineering plans, something that it did not want to jeopardize. Triumph also wanted a single vendor that was fully accountable for project success across the end-to-end needs. Infor solutions, all fully integrated, handle the full scope of the various steps, using Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) capabilities to manage the design through bill of materials, providing a clear history of every part for each bike manufactured.

Business challenges

- Approximately 170 different systems supported the business.

- The legacy systems were run on IBM (AS/400) systems and Triumph struggled to attract developers to maintain tools and build new projects.

- Previous efforts within Triumph to remove the dependence on AS/400 legacy systems were viewed as IT-led, which resulted in some resistance.

- Legacy applications prevented the business from gaining key data insights.

- A significant part of the challenge is the adoption and management of change practices, rather than being solely software processes.

Given the scale and volume of Triumph's manufacturing, the integration is being delivered in phases. Infor and PTC Windchill are working together to ensure a smooth transition.

Results so far

Infor and Triumph have successfully rolled out phase one across eighteen months. The new system has added the agility for improved product ordering and communication with customers. Infor LN's data-driven processes also encouraged Triumph to assess its standard BOM and eBOM (engineering bill of materials) handling, also streamlining processes.

In a May 2021 interview with The Manufacturer, Looker noted the early successes: "We've been very successful in rolling out phase one… We wanted to get the agility and ability to configure bikes and flex bikes within the system. We achieved all of that. Eventually, we want to make sure that we can communicate better with our customers going forward. And a lot of those customer-facing elements of the system are steadily going live over the next three or four months."

Success has come from breaking down the project into smaller parts to deliver success (currently one-third of the total system is live), creating enthusiasm for the planned elements going live and delivering greater benefits.

Access to real-time data and metrics from across its factories and lines is an important benefit that is already being realized. With the successful migration to Infor LN, Triumph has increased visibility and control over line assembly, the quality of computer-aided design schemes, and bill of materials.

Another benefit is that it is easier to analyze and review data generated by the core ERP than previously. All Triumph's data is accessible in one place and comes with improved data governance to ensure data quality. This translates to more practical data entry systems, such as barcodes or QR code scanners, replacing manual data entry methods with RFID to improve accuracy.

Other benefits include enabling Triumph to see just how much "dirty" data was generated in the old set of systems, and how much easier it is to analyze with the new digital platform from Infor, improving the speed and quality of decision-making.

Looking ahead

Phase two of the project is now underway, stretching across another 24 months of work. Now, phases are shifting as the business horizon evolves around Triumph's business realities and changes. Still, the focus remains on what data is important to the business over the coming years. The plan is to deploy Infor LN as the backbone business system, integrating Microsoft Power BI, data governance, and AI tools as they become available to improve information quality.

Business results

- Replace the company's disparate systems with a core end-to-end system.

- Generate high-level support and focus by compiling core business case for the concept. Rather than IT-led, this project, called Business Connected, took a 360-degree view of Triumph and became a business transformation project.

- Provide greater dealer visibility into the supply chain through a market-to-order system so dealers can understand what's in their pipeline and make firm promises to customers, improving relationships.

- Create a digital marketplace for inventory to be traded between dealers, reducing effort required to support dealers and enabling focus on the top 20% and bottom 20% of sales.

- Provide better lead management with the ability to convert customer leads into firm sales faster than previously, aiming to increase lead conversion in all key markets.

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