

# FW Thorpe

# ccl

F W Thorpe plc is a group of companies specialising in the manufacture and distribution of specialist lighting equipment. The Thorpe name is well known in the lighting industry, having started as a family firm in the 1930s, and having been involved in the lighting trade ever since.

One of their subsidiaries is Thorlux which offers approximately 9,000 product variations. This wide range, although attractive to the customer, causes significant administration and planning problems



within the business. The company had previously managed the business using multiple unconnected computer systems; Tetra for Sales Order

Processing and Accounts, parts of the Micross Production Control software suite for the manufacturing process, and a series of stand-alone computer systems and manual links to join the gaps.

Establishing and controlling the link between the orders and the 'real' customer was a key requirement of the new system. The specialist software requirements were very challenging, but with the help of the CCL methodology, Thorlux was able to produce a specification, and using the structure approach select a suitable software supplier. Thorlux decided that the most effective and least disruptive approach would be to replace the Tetra functionality first by implementing selected modules of the new software. This Phase was thought to be relatively simple as the existing Sales Order Processing and Accounting procedures were thought to be easily transferable to the new software.

Some months into the installation progress was not as good as expected, as the supplier's project manager was not driving the implementation. CCL were invited to assist and by producing detailed plans for software configuration, management, education, operator training and data transfer were able to bring the project back on track.

The experience at Thorlux highlights that in order to ensure a successful implementation there is a need for strong Project Management both by the supplier and by the client. However, the suppliers interests and the clients do not always coincide. Internal staff will already be committed to their own roles and it is unlikely that any of the internal staff have previous Computer Project Management experience.

Peter Mason, Financial Director at F W Thorpe, echoes this view. Peter says "The CCL Project Management Methodology helped us identify and address the important issues so that we could focus our resources on the successful implementation of the chosen system. Based on our experience we would most certainly recommend CCL for business critical system selection and implementation."



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