

Devi has warm
welcome for epicor
iscalala

Business



With 18 subsidiary companies and partners across Europe, the Americas and new ventures in the Asian markets, DEVI is the leader in electrical under floor heating. In 1994, following a decade of continual expansion, the company re-evaluated its IT infrastructure and decided that it would be best served by moving away from its mainframe systems towards a more localised server approach to support the international structure of the organisation. The Epicor Scala solution was chosen as the group wide enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and in 2003, the switch to Epicor iScala 2. 2 combined with a move to a thin client model has enabled DEVI to streamline both its IT support costs to around one percent of turnover while improving manufacturing and order processing efficiency.

Since it's beginning in Copenhagen in 1942, DEVI - a Danish abbreviation of ; Danish Electric Heating Industry" has grown to become Europe's largest manufacturer of electrical under floor heating. As part of the multi-billion euro Danfoss Group, one of Denmark's largest industrial groups, it has strived to grow beyond its traditional European markets with a great deal of success. With the rise of low cost Windows /Intel servers in the mid 1990's, senior management within DEVI decided to re-evaluate its long term IT infrastructure to both support its ongoing expansion and create a platform to stabilise IT support costs which were running at around four to five percent of turnover. At the time, its IBM based AS400 solution although powerful was judged to be inflexible, costly to support and deploy at new DEVI offices and subsidiaries in its emerging markets." Our business was very dependent on the AS400 systems and the number of bespoke solutions that connected to it from manufacturing, accounting and sales. Making even small changes to

business processes or systems very time consuming and costly,” explains Kim Nissen, DEVI corporate IT Manager. “ We looked at a number of possible solutions including Navision, Baan and Movex but for us the Epicor Scala solution looked like a much better fit for our business and via internal testing we estimated that we could deploy it with minimal disruption to our business.” Through a lengthy evaluation process, DEVI determined that conversion tools and parameter-based flexibility of the Epicor Scala product would allow them to avoid a lengthy migration process.

Also, the software already had good customisation to allow them to adhere to strict legal requirements for reporting. Another key factor was the strong language support that offered both corporate English as well as local country languages such as Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish and German.” We managed to fully roll out the solution to 18 separate sites covering 150 users in around 18 months from the start of the project without disrupting our business processes and the initial benefits were very positive.” DEVI managed to integrate many of its older bespoke systems into the Epicor Scala solution, which provided improvement in productivity and reduced IT support cost considerably. Based on a detailed cost analyst, DEVI concluded that its is running its whole ERP installation including internal process and consultants at 35 percent of the costs compared to related manufacturing businesses of a similar size. The integrated nature of the Epicor Scala solution also allows the company to make significant changes to its manufacturing process to improve agility and productivity.

“ One of the major advantages of the Epicor Scala solution was that we could deploy the system to a 10 user field office and a 100 user regional

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headquarters with the same level of functionality and support for local language.” With the Epicor Scala solution in place and working well, DEVI’s next major upgrade came with the arrival of iScala. “ For us iScala offered us further opportunities to streamline our IT infrastructure by switching to a thin client style implementation using Windows Terminal services. It also gave us powerful new electronic document tools to allow us to better process purchase orders, sales confirmation and internal dispatch notes.” The new implementation model uses a central iScala server bank at DEVI headquarters in Vejle (Denmark) to provide sessions to users in 15 locations via RDP thin client protocol. From 2003, DEVI has implemented an ongoing project to improve both internal and external workflow with iScala at the heart of the system.

The upgrade also allowed DEVI to switch to Unicode for data collection and storing allowing the company to compile its disparate databases for stock codes, supplier codes and miscellaneous information into a single repository.” We had a long term vision with iScala which the DEVI board has deemed an unquestionable economic success. In fact, our total IT costs including servers, ERP, hardware depreciation, technical staff, consultants, infrastructure and BPR projects were in 2004 proved to be 1. 1 percent of the group turnover. Now our IT teams have ongoing projects focused on improvement instead of just supporting and maintaining the infrastructure,” Nissen concludes.

An example of a recent iScala enabled project is the simultaneous printing of user manuals and labelling based on manufacturing schedules and county destination. The flexibility of the system is allowing the DEVI IT team to think

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