



INTEGRATING ALL OPERATIONS IN ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX BUSINESSES IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY

'We have been very happy with that sense of shared ownership and partnership.'

For this case study we spoke to Ria Watson (Project Manager) and Craig Hodgson (Group Commercial Director) of RMS Group about their experiences with Ultimate Software and their implementation of the Flex Maritime Logistics solution developed by Ultimate Software.

An introduction to RMS group

Before the interview, we flew over the Humber river with a BBC drone. More than 30 rivers flow into the Humber and the estuary drains more than 20% of England's river water into the sea. It is UK's busiest estuary and home to four major ports. RMS has a geographic advantage over its competitors, being able to operate in every major port on the Humber; they provide "one number for the Humber". Millions of tonnes of steel, aluminium, paper, timber and other products are handled by RMS Group, providing customers with excellent services in shipping, stevedoring, storage warehousing and distribution. RMS is known for its good performance, delivery accuracy and flexibility.

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CHALLENGE
INTEGRATE ALL GROUP
PROCESSES INTO A
SINGLE SYSTEM TO
OPERATE MORE
EFFECTIVELY

Craig tells about the challenge RMS had: "Despite being in one business, we had multiple systems operating on different sites. Where we handled cargo for customers in multiple ports, we were not able to provide them with the same administrative service for all ports. Also, from some of these systems, we were not able to extract data in a format we preferred to use, like an Excel format. Without lots of manual intervention, the procedures we have did not fit into our systems, e.g. to generate invoices. To operate more effectively, we wanted to migrate to a single system across our business."

"we are a complex business in terms of number of sites, range of commodities handled, and processes undertaken with these products and our businesses have been run as individual businesses rather than as cohesive parts of the group. That is why part of the project was to reengineer the business processes in each business: we had to understand what each of our businesses is doing and why and how they're doing it. It was surprising to see how many offline spreadsheets were being created every day. We wanted to automate as much as we possibly could to ensure accuracy and save time."

"We wanted a system that works for our business today, but also has scalability should business need dictate this in the future."

"This project has been driven by a desire to provide better service to our customers, while being more efficient internally.."





“The link between Dynamics and Flex Maritime Logistics made a lot of sense.”

“We found information on Flex Maritime Logistics through a web search and made an initial contact with Ultimate Software. We had other systems besides Flex Maritime Logistics on our short list; they were pure off-the-shelf control systems. What we liked about the Flex Maritime Logistics solution was that it would be capable of becoming an end-to-end solution; ships agency, operational planning and transport management were included. This felt like a better solution than going for a straight off-the-shelf system. And, as part of the project, we opted for Microsoft Dynamics 365, as it would be more integrative whatever solution we went with. The link between Dynamics and Flex Maritime Logistics made a lot of sense.”

Ria continues: “During this project, we have built a very good relationship with Ultimate Software. They understand our business and they understand what we require from the system. Flex Maritime Logistics largely fits our business but we have had to make some changes, e.g. for output that we specifically need. They have been really good at doing that for us. Throughout the implementation, they have spent multiple weeks on site with us. They have come to know the business and have the technical expertise on Flex Maritime Logistics and Dynamics. This has been really helpful in resolving issues and they have quickly been able to pinpoint any problem areas.”

“As a project team, we had the most benefit from dealing with mostly the same people,” Craig explains, “that personal touch, having that faith in people consistently, really helps in the team dynamics, feeling that sense of shared ownership and partnership guarantees the continuity. In the initial conversations we all were a bit too optimistic about how long the project would take. Time scales slipped and I understand the reasons why. I see this as a joint responsibility. We couldn’t have known beforehand exactly where we might stumble. There has been a lot of flexibility on both sides. We are both investing in the product and in the relationship to integrate the processes in this business.”

SOLUTION
SHARED OWNERSHIP,
WORKING ON AN
END-TO-END SOLUTION

RESULT
INTEGRATION IN THE
BUSINESS TO BETTER
SERVICE OUR CUSTOMERS

"This end-to-end solution felt like a better solution than going for a straight off-the-shelf system."

"This project has been driven by a desire to provide better service to our customers, while being more efficient internally. We believe there is real value in being able to manage the business in terms of management information and key performance indicators, and to be able to generate reports without the manual aspects of the old invoicing process. We are close to being able to move away from Excel data."

"The next step is to go to our customers, explain the IT investments that we have made, and then discover how we can exploit extra integration with our customers in data exchange, to further automate and integrate with them. We have just launched our new customer portal which will offer them better flexibility."

