



Goal:

Within strict time frames, select and implement the correct business information system to support the transition of becoming an independent commercial organization.

Challenge:

- Implement a system to support ABRO's business, which is 100% repair.
- Have the system up and running in 11 sites within two years.
- Implement the system with no modifications.
- Be on time and within budget.

Solution:

The Cincom CONTROL™ manufacturing solution with implementation services and support.

Results:

- The system was implemented under budget and within the government's time frame.
- Improved productivity through implementing best-practice processes across all sites.
- Reduced IT costs through implementing a common commercial off-the-shelf solution (COTS) to replace multiple diverse systems.
- Improved business performance in terms of reporting, purchasing, materials, costing and planning.
- Provided a platform to increase competitiveness and take ABRO's business forward.

Profile in success: **ABRO**

Cincom implementation helps ABRO win multifront battle – On time and under budget



Business challenge

In 1993, ABRO (formerly Army Base Repair Organization) became a Trading Fund of the Ministry of Defense (MoD). It was given the freedom and opportunity to develop its facilities, efficiency and skill base into a commercial organization.

However, the catalyst for serious change was an edict issued by the Minister of State for the Armed Forces stating that ABRO must be independent of the MoD by March 2005. The company faced the need to address all of its process issues and decided to use IT as an enabler to make the transition from where it was to where it wanted to be.

It became apparent that many of the processes, functions and disciplines needed to complete this separation simply didn't exist. The time frame was tight, but ABRO chose to seek a complete replacement business system that could help it to reach the necessary organizational standard.

System selection

ABRO is still an integral part of the MoD, and it is bound by compliance with government rules and regulations that require significant purchases to pass through a formal selection process.



A comprehensive tender document was sent to a large number of vendors that were selected from the European Journal of suppliers who are permitted to bid for government projects. ABRO received responses from 15 companies, and a filter exercise reduced this list to three. These three companies entered a more in-depth assessment and were marked on a points basis, with vendors scoring according to their aptitude for ABRO's criteria.

Brian Edye, ABRO's Project Manager, explains, "Cincom came through as clearly the system that best fitted our requirements. The other important plus point was, we felt that the Cincom organization was one we could really work with."

A key factor was Cincom's ability to demonstrate its system operating in similar repair environments.

According to Edye, "It is also worth remembering that ABRO is in the repair business. Repair is really engineering-to-order, and the ability to have a flexible bill of materials was key because a repair does not always replace all of the parts all of the time."

The implementation

The starting point for the implementation was to reinforce the objectives of:

- Achieving independence
- Creating materials and supply-chain management that did not previously exist
- Taking advantage of "best-of-breed" practices offered by a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) package
- Moving away from an in-house, customized solution
- Implementing a system with no changes – a "vanilla" implementation

ABRO used a pragmatic implementation procedure based on Prince 2, a standard project-management methodology that is widely used for all government projects. In line with this, a project team of individuals with knowledge and understanding across the organization was created and dedicated full time to the project.

To get top-level commitment, a steering group was created that included senior directors. This demonstrates how seriously the board supported the project and its value to the business. ABRO also appointed an external project manager due to the tight timetable and criticality of success.

"The other important plus point was, we felt that the Cincom organization was one we could really work with."

– Brian Edye
ABRO, Project Manager

Site-by-Site buy-in

A joint project plan was created to map out the requirements to achieve completion within the 18 months specified. This document formed the foundation of all subsequent work.

Due to the integrated nature of the solution, it would have been difficult to implement on a function-by-function basis (i.e., sales first, then materials, then purchasing) so ABRO chose to implement on a site-by-site basis, facilitating change management while unifying previously disparate systems.

Next ABRO decided to roll out rather than re-implement each site. This meant that all design, development and testing of the entire system's structure had to be completed and "signed off on" before any implementation took place. The Bovington site, which is neither the largest nor the smallest, was chosen as the "guinea pig" because it represents the extensive breadth of business types that depict ABRO's operations.

Individuals from all of the other sites were selected to “champion” the system and were brought into the project team from the beginning. These individuals could get their sites’ agreement to changes in processes and, more importantly, obtain buy-in for change.

Moving forward

The next phase was to understand what the system offered in relation to business processes. After a briefing by the Cincom consultants, the project team members and Cincom consultants mapped out how the system would operate and looked for areas that might require changes.

All of that work, which included mapping, testing and piloting (transferring test data out of the existing system), etc. was completed within seven months.

Since the Cincom implementation had already been proven in sites similar to ABRO’s, the project team was able to overcome prejudices. The old adage of, “we always used to do this with the old system,” was countered with the fact that Cincom represented “best practices,” and this was used to guide the group toward agreement.

Go live

Approximately 77 business processes had been documented with the mapping phase, defining how ABRO would operate. This was agreed to by all 10 sites and all functions to ensure total commitment.

Because of the tight timetable, ABRO decided to go live knowing that some things can only be understood under “real” conditions. The end of the mapping phase was marked by two days of training for a large number of ABRO employees. The end result was a document signed by the project team, site and functional representatives and the whole steering group. This document was then used by the project team as a sanction to proceed.

The first site went live in January 2004. The entire ABRO/Cincom project team was on-site, with “man for man” marking in key areas. The joint team used knowledge gained in this first implementation to tweak the system and refine processes.

The second site went live in June 2004 and from then until completion, a site was implemented every month. As the expected minor changes surfaced, they were easily addressed at every site because there is only one system, one database, and one common way of working for everybody.

Results – on time and under budget

ABRO has achieved the target that was laid down by the Ministerial Advisory Board, on time and under budget. The final implementation encompasses 11 geographical locations with approximately 1,100 users on the system. In addition, there are another 300 users of the business information system.

The initial goal was to be independent of the MoD and to have fully functional systems throughout the whole business cycle by the end of March 2005. The last site went live at the end of February, one month before the deadline. There is a whole-life budget, and so ABRO is under the overall anticipated spending amount.

ABRO now has a complete, end-to-end, fully integrated business system that fully enables all employees to access the same information at every site. Different departments now have visibility of common information, which has eliminated disagreements and disputes. Common business processes and ways of working have been introduced, improving efficiency when moving staff or products around the 11 sites. Clear productivity savings have resulted, with better discipline in data accuracy and best-practice processes across the board.

“I would have no qualms in recommending Cincom to an organization in a similar situation to us.”

– Brian Edye
ABRO, Project Manager

What has doing business with Cincom been like?

Cincom provided services to ABRO in two main areas: applications consultancy and technical support. Brian Edye, ABRO Project Manager states, “We have been very pleased with the support that we have received from Cincom. The team has helped us through the process of understanding what the system can do, and we have been struck by the breadth of experience of all the people.

“Many of our own people are not familiar with this sort of system – few really knew what an MRP system was! So there was a lot of education required at a basic, operational level.”

On the technical side, Cincom consultants helped develop the technology infrastructure at ABRO. Brian continues, “We now have a web-deployed system, and in setting up the web servers, Unix servers and clients, we had to rely very heavily on Cincom to support us. I would have no qualms in recommending Cincom to an organization in a similar situation to us.”

Company background

ABRO is an engineering service, repair and re-manufacturing organization offering a worldwide capability to defense, emergency service, local government and industry. Capabilities range from small arms to battle tanks, motorcycles to commercial vehicles and binoculars to thermal-imaging equipment. ABRO also offers a comprehensive fleet-management service to its customers.

A highly flexible, strategically sited workforce of approximately 2,500 ensures that ABRO is capable of meeting large-scale repair and overhaul requirements. A wide range of skills and expertise, together with detailed knowledge, allows ABRO to compete effectively in a wide range of equipment types and technologies, across a number of markets.

Extensive experience has been gained in supporting and maintaining the response capabilities of bodies such as the British Army, Air Force, Police and local councils. This understanding has allowed ABRO to develop a service that focuses on delivering total quality and value.

Timeline

October 2002

Defined initial requirements. Issued ITT and evaluated suppliers. Chose system and supplier. Obtained board go-ahead.

December 2002

Decision.

January 2003

Project green light.

February 2003

Project planning started.

March 2003

Project team assembled.

November 2003

Education, design, testing, processes, and understanding.

December 2003

User training.

January 2004

First site live.

June 2004

Second site live.

July 2004 – February 2005

Sites implemented at the rate of one per month.

February 2005

Last site live – **one month early.**

March 2005

Deadline.

Cincom and the Quadrant Logo are registered trademarks of Cincom Systems, Inc. All other trademarks belong to their respective companies.

© 2005, 2006 Cincom Systems, Inc.

FORM CM031117-1 5/06

Printed in U.S.A.

All Rights Reserved

World Headquarters • Cincinnati, OH USA • US 1-800-2CINCOM

Fax 1-513-612-2000 • International 1-513-612-2769

E-mail info@cincom.com • <http://www.cincom.com>

