Evertaut
In the hot seat for digital transformation

A manufacturer of seating is expecting significant growth in global markets after embarking on a digital transformation with the support from Made Smarter.

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Evertaut, based in Blackburn, makes auditorium and contract seating for a wide range of establishments across the UK from schools and universities, theatres and cinemas, to hospitals and football clubs.

But the 90-year-old business has been hampered by legacy systems and practices.

Made Smarter has helped Evertaut kick-start its digital transformation by investing in new software which connects disparate systems and enables real-time visibility of all operations.

The game-changing solution is predicted to boost productivity and profit, create new jobs, and free up the leadership team to focus on growth in global markets.

Chris Smalley, Co-owner, said: *"The gains of this new technology are quite staggering. We are going to have real-time access to production data for the first time. This will undoubtedly contribute to the growth of the business.*

"We couldn't grow at the rate we are predicting without investing in new technology, and we have Made Smarter to thank for that."

The Challenge
First established in the 1930s as a supplier of industrial seating, Evertaut fell on hard times at the turn of the century, before being revived by long-standing employee Nigel Smalley.

Now retired, the business is starting a new period of its history led by Nigel's son Chris and his wife Nicole.

The new owners have a bold and ambitious strategic plan which includes a digital roadmap to transform Evertaut into a smart manufacturer for the 21st Century.

Evertaut's key challenge is its reliance on manual, time-consuming, paper-based systems and legacy systems to collect and inspect data across the business, particularly the shop floor where the chairs and seating are made through a blend of automation and by hand. Nicole explained: *"Senior management spend a considerable amount of their time on administrative duties simply collecting and collating data into reports for analysis. Our current system does its job, but we are slow to react to problems and have no oversight of what is happening in real-time.*

"This is hindering us from focussing on driving efficiency, increasing productivity and high value tasks such as increasing our reach into the international markets.

"We want to use digital technology to automate these repetitive tasks and free up time to focus on value added activity."

The Solution
Evertaut has invested in manufacturing-specialist ERP software (Progress Plus) which will integrate production with all other functions of the business.

The software will automatically collect and collate data from its production processes and display it on a platform in real-time.

Senior management will also be able to access the data remotely and create reports based on the data. Meanwhile, by integrating its CAD software, production staff will access new designs in real-time.

The Benefits
Automating key business functions and enabling real-time visibility for fast and accurate decision-making is forecast to free up 20% of the time of senior management - the equivalent to one day a week.

This will enable the team to focus on new sales and business development activities which Evertaut says will support its target of increasing turnover by 70% over the next three years.

The plan includes creating nine new jobs and upskilling its existing staff of 14.

The software is predicted to enhance the operational efficiency, reducing the time spent on order processing by 10%. Meanwhile, accurate stock management, better sales predictors and reporting are forecast to increase product profitability by five per cent.

Accurate job costing based on the availability of new data is also projected to increase net profit margins by over 10% in the first 12 months.

The software will also improve customer relationship management through increased visibility of where orders are in the system.

The project will also support Evertaut's sustainability goals. By reducing paper in favour of digital processes, remote access to data will discourage unnecessary trips into the office, and furthermore, the solution has transport routing capability which will optimise logistics and reduce travel.

The company also plans to use additional profits to invest in cultivating the biodiversity of company grounds to offset their carbon emissions.

The Future
The software has been configured to the bespoke demands of Evertaut, future-proofing the development of the system as the company grows and evolves.

With digital tools at the heart of its growth plan, Evertaut is also focussed on the digital readiness of its team for such a change.

Nicole said: *"One of our greatest assets is a team of dedicated, long-serving staff with a passion for our products. A lot of work has gone into preparing our valuable team for the immense change coming and moving away from entrenched ideas and processes.*

"We want to capture that trust and ensure the team plays a pivotal role in Evertaut's return to prosperity and visibility on the global stage. It's a truly exciting time for the business."

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