



BRIDGESTONE notches up on efficiency with improved enterprise data management

Upon hearing the word ‘Bridgestone’, one cannot help but immediately associate the household brand with the Formula 1 champion team Ferrari. No doubt that Bridgestone is among the top brand for tyres in the world.

Bridgestone Corporation is headquartered in Tokyo, Japan and this world-class manufacturer produces a complete line of tyres that account for close to 80 per cent of its total sales worldwide. They are also a manufacturer of a wide product range of which includes industrial rubber and chemical products that are sold in more than 150 nations and territories around the world.

In Malaysia, Bridgestone Armstrong (M) Sdn Bhd (‘BAM’) was established to manufacture flexible polyurethane foams (FPF) and adhesive foamed sheets.



Lye: “We had a total upgrade, not just pockets of improvement”

These products are extensively used in the automotive industry, and electronic and electrical sectors – for a wide spectrum of applications ranging from insulation, sealing, gasket, cushioning, filtration, liquid absorption up to speaker edge and more.

In the continual quest for top-notch quality products, BAM always looks for ways to improve their business processes that would in turn translate to greater operational efficiencies.

Data Management Dire

The company embarked on their first computerization project in 1996, mainly driven by the problems caused by not having a competent data management system.

Lye Cheong Heng, Factory Manager of BAM explains, “We sorely lacked a good data processing management tool with which to operate the company. BAM needed a data management system that would enable us to integrate our business from end-to-end.”

BAM also realized that they could not afford to compromise on a mediocre data management system that might not be able to cope with the plant’s expanding operations.

In addition to the key strength in integration, Lye noted that data management system needed to be user friendly in a way that all business information was readily available at the fingertips.

After a throughout business requirement study, BAM set on the goal of replacing their multiple computer systems – which were then sitting on multiple operating platforms, into a single common enterprise system.

“We evaluated many, many systems in the market before we finally settled on the PRONTO-Xi business solution,” says Lye.



“In comparison with the other ERP offerings, PRONTO-Xi exhibited the exact functionalities and capabilities that BAM had in its criteria in on which to base their choice of an enterprise-wide computing system”.

End-to-end Improvements

Even through initial usage of the new PRONTO-Xi sales, purchasing, production and finance modules, BAM recorded immense improvements – especially in terms of its quality control, supply chain process and stock flow.

The implementation of the PRONTO-Xi financials and distribution modules has been in operational since early 1997 and Lye attests that records show that BAM is now much better prepared in responding to the movements and changes in its supply-chain.

“One may think that putting in an enterprise system brings about pockets of efficiencies throughout the organization. But it is not so with PRONTO-Xi. BAM is enjoying a seamless, end-to-end environment whereby all the key processes and information from order generation, to production planning, to warehouse procedures, and to logistics management link right through in their to delivery and billing,” testifies Lye.

This organization-wide integration of data and process flow has brought about significant cost savings to BAM. Lye says that the automation of paper-based processes, improved inventory accuracy through real-time inventory control, as well as forecasting capabilities for demand prediction – are some of the primary areas where we are experiencing cost savings.

“Additionally, with pertinent information easily at our fingertips, we have been able to better respond to our customer needs and manage our inventory levels to reduce obsolete excess stock.”

Superior quality is a key objective for Bridgestone worldwide and there is no compromise for its manufacturing operations in Malaysia.

“It is crucial that the enterprise system that we have, commits to quality in the way Bridgestone does. We are talking quality not only in terms of production, but also in terms of service, in terms of packaging, and in terms of delivery”, summarizes Lye.

Good Design, Good Dependability

Lye says that PRONTO-Xi was selected because it was simply the stronger and technically designed in a better manner.

“We were impressed by its future plans to include new functionalities, and the systems’ flexibility – particularly in the order processing and parameter settings aspects.”

BAM shares its ‘Key Criteria’ list

The criteria for the BAM enterprise software selection is as follows:

1. Cost effectiveness

First and foremost, the enterprise system had to be cost effective. Bridgestone Armstrong Malaysia is a medium sized company with 150 employees, and it was crucial that the enterprise system could guarantee a quick return on investment (ROI) on its cost. “BAM’s notion of ROI covers a comprehensive calculation that includes software upgrades, reliable long-term support and scalable system growth,” explains Lye.

2. User friendliness

To save on extensive training costs that are required of many enterprise systems, BAM listed user-friendliness as a high priority in its selection criteria.

“PRONTO-Xi is not perfect,” admits Lye. “But it is probably the best software package in the market in terms of user-friendliness. We were really impressed that we could literally place our fingers on the keyboard and start working. Even without any training, you could place an order, carry out product allocation and prepare invoices - simply by following the instructions on the screen, while not having to worry that everything else would be taken care off reliably at the backend by the system.”

3. Customer-service focused

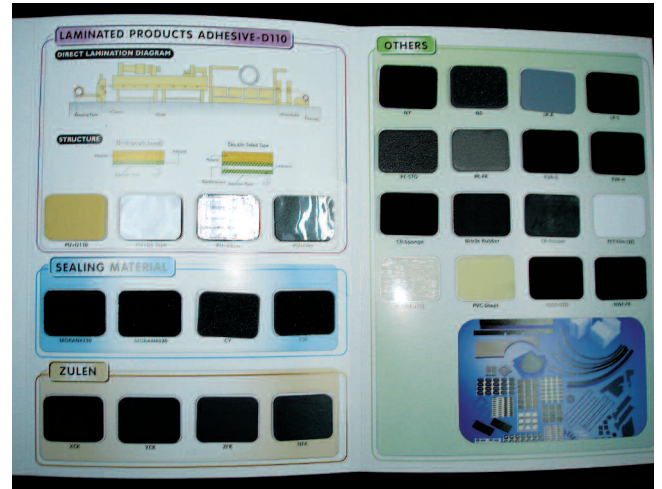
Third on the criteria was a customer-focused system. Due to BAM’s business nature, it was essential that the enterprise system could provide superior stock information, and give a clear view of future sales requirements. A key advantage of the PRONTO system was that it allowed personnel at the managerial levels to obtain information directly from the system.



BAM was also convinced that SL Information System - the local systems supplier and integrator for the PRONTO-Xi, was able to provide them with required after-sales support.

SL offered a proven 'one-stop shop' approach, whereby as BAM's IT solutions provider, taking full responsibility for the overhaul project of BAM's entire enterprise system. This increased BAM's confidence in the project's success, and helped to build a productive client-provider relationship that was essential during the crucial implementation period.

"SL's PRONTO-Xi consultants an absolute delight to work with. They have been able to fulfill our diverse and demanding requirements, while taking into account our specific industry requirements and business practices," says Lye.



Bridgestone Armstrong (M) Sdn Bhd profile

- Manufacturing plants covers a land area of 14,179m².
- Exports products mainly to China, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippine, United States, and more.
- Internationally recognized quality awards include ISO 9001 (since 1998) and ISO 14001 (since 2004).

