

Kwalu Produces Durable Furniture with 'Durable' SYSPRO

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Erwin Bartsch, MIS Manager, Kwalu



■ The Company

Kwalu, based in Ridgeland, South Carolina, custom manufactures highly durable furniture for hospitals, schools, hotels and numerous other business entities. Founded in 1984, the company's modular product line enables customers to mix and match different styles of frames with various choices of upholstery to create uniquely customized designs that are as beautiful as they are durable. Kwalu also offers co-ordinating wainscot, handrails, corner and wall guards and wall coverings to complete the look each client wants to achieve.

Kwalu furniture and associated products use a processed material that captures the beauty of wood but is far more durable. The patented process, developed by Kwalu, involves the production of high-impact resistant polymers that mimic wood grain. The graining appears throughout the product, enabling the sanding of scuffs, scratches and other damages without the need to re-stain or re-finish the surface. Kwalu prides itself on the fact that the modularity of its products makes the company a single source for designers and facilities. Kwalu also believes the durability of its products is unmatched in the furniture industry and commensurately offers a 10-year warranty covering both finish and construction.

Kwalu's roster of customers numbers well over 10,000. The company's orders are generated both nationally and internationally from a network of dealers, independent representatives and distributors.

■ The Challenge

When MIS Manager Erwin Bartsch joined Kwalu some seven years ago, he 'inherited' the currently implemented software, SYSPRO, running on a Unix platform. Rather than seek a new software solution, Bartsch decided to work with SYSPRO to determine whether there was a need to replace the system.

■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Kwalu

INDUSTRY

Furniture and Fittings:
▪ Manufacturing

THE CHALLENGE

- Unique requirements
- High degree of customization
- Exponential growth

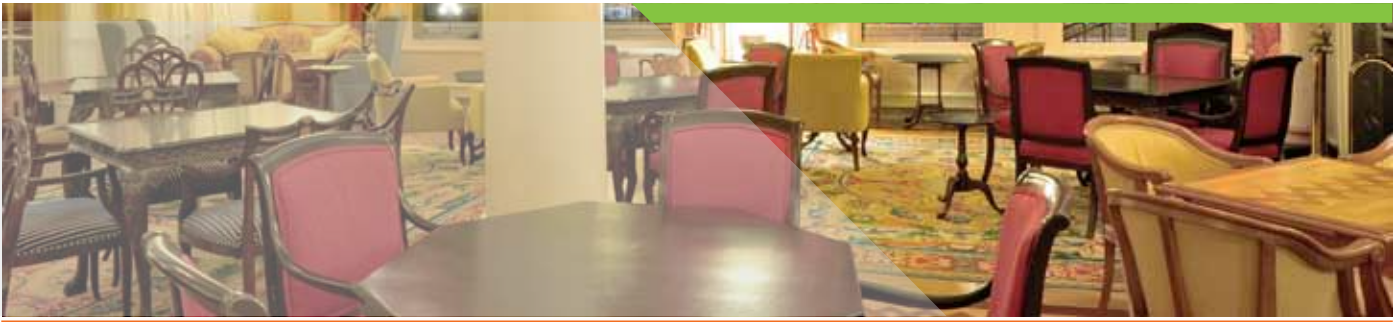
SOLUTION & SERVICES

- SYSPRO Financials
- Office Automation
- SYSPRO e.net Solutions
- e.net Manager
- Bill of Materials
- Work in Progress
- SQL Manager
- SYSPRO CRM

THE BENEFITS

- Improved efficiency
- Integrated solution which is easy to learn and use
- Real-time inventory levels
- Automatic kitting
- Reduced excess stock inventories
- Lower operating costs
- More competitive pricing structure
- Reduced shipping costs
- Improved customer satisfaction

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Furniture • Wall Protection



■ The Solution

The more Bartsch worked with the solution, the more he felt it to be ideal for Kwalu. Today, 24 concurrent users work with SYSPRO running on a Microsoft platform on top of SQL 2000. The company's manufacturing plant and two warehouses tie into the corporate office computer through a bonded T1 connection.

Bartsch believes there is no reason to switch from SYSPRO. "SYSPRO continues to be an innovator in software development and continually develops its product to keep pace with technological advances," he says. "SYSPRO keeps up with the demands of our business." He also feels this assessment is validated by the number of awards SYSPRO continues to win.

Bartsch says SYSPRO accommodates the company's unique requirements. He likes the adaptability of the product, the add-on modules, bar coding, SQL and email integration. He also appreciates the ability to customize the software through SYSPRO e.net Solutions and is anticipating using it to automate information sent to customers regarding the status of their orders, delivery dates, billings and other similar data.

■ The Result

Bartsch notes that Kwalu has grown exponentially since he joined the company and encountered SYSPRO. During this time, the company has added new product lines, including case goods, tables and wall protection products.

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In addition to furthering growth, SYSPRO has also helped to improve efficiency at Kwalu. "SYSPRO is a single integrated solution that is easy to learn and use," Bartsch says.

While he admits to looking at other CRM programs on the market, Bartsch appreciates the functionality SYSPRO CRM software affords through integration with SYSPRO ERP. Because SYSPRO e.net solutions enabled Kwalu to write its own proprietary bar code program that integrates directly into SYSPRO MRP, Kwalu now has the ability to view real-time inventory levels, do automatic 'kitting' and review the progress of products as they move along the manufacture/assembly line.

The result is that Kwalu has reduced excess stock inventories and lowered operating costs. These savings have enabled the company to gain new business by adopting a more competitive pricing structure. The savings also allow Kwalu to compete successfully against competitors that have lowered costs by moving their manufacturing operations offshore.

Bartsch details other savings brought about by SYSPRO. Because real-time tracking determines if an order is on schedule, potential delays can be averted and partial or split shipments can be eliminated. This alone has resulted in substantially reduced shipping costs as well as increased customer satisfaction. It also permits Kwalu managers to concentrate on quality issues rather than crisis management. In addition, SYSPRO permits a more effective use of personnel. Without the automation provided by the software, it would take 2-3 full-time employees to manually enter data.

With the way SYSPRO software adds to the company's bottom line, Bartsch feels the annual SYSPRO software license fee is a true bargain. He also raves about SYSPRO's customer service. "It is at such a high level that I'd be hard-pressed to find anything like it elsewhere," he concludes.