EFI RADIUS DELIVERS COMPLETE BUSINESS TRANSPARENCY AT CHROMAPRINT

When Coimbatore-based packaging printing major Chromaprint was scouring the market for a Packaging focused Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution to aide their growing operation, EFI and Radius are what they turned to, with great success.

The growth conundrum

"Before Radius, our business was akin to commuters who sincerely wanted to follow traffic rules, but were limited by the policeman's mood on the day…. With EFI Radius, it is like being at the cross-roads with an automated signal system," says Jojo Mathew, production manager at Chromaprint.

The company, which became a private limited entity in 2005, has invested heavily in machinery and personnel as business has taken off, growing from 12 employees to 200.

Explaining the reasons why the company decided to look for a Packaging ERP solution, Mathew says, "As our growth trajectory took an upturn, we started facing some problems. We had a lot of jobs, but the ability to track them and ensure we were able to deliver it on time, commit and communicate the right status to the client, schedule and manage shop floor priorities, was increasingly getting harder."

Choosing EFI Radius

On identifying the need for an end-to-end Packaging ERP system to run the organisation, Chromaprint's management team embarked on a market study exercise to evaluate various options and choose the best fit.

"We knew we needed a product that has a world-wide reputation and proven capabilities in companies similar to ours. The search led us to the obvious choice of EFI Radius, as it is used by some of the best

packaging service providers in the world," explains E Prabhu, pre-press manager of the company. "Not to forget, we knew the list of modules and features it has would solve most of our concerns and problems."

The growth path

The company, which started its operations in 1993 with a single-colour press and a couple of platen punching machines, now has a fleet of presses for both cut-sheet offset and label printing along with a fully equipped finishing line at its 50,000 sqft factory on the outskirts of Coimbatore.

"Founded by our managing director RLN Moorthy, the company has grown steadily since its inception in 1993. The modernisation of our facilities was further accelerated in 2005 when the company became a private limited entity," says S Murali, general manager of Chromaprint.

The company caters to some of the biggest FMCG, liquor and pharma brands in India and also has a substantial chunk of its turnover from the export market.

"In terms of the shop floor personnel, our management took a policy decision to train and employ female operators, and in fact, our fleet of cutting machines are exclusively handled by them," Murali explains.

"Our strength lies in label printing using foil stamping technique, that we supply to a range of leading FMCG and liquor producers as well as the pharmaceutical industry, too. In recent years, we have also strengthened our label offering by adding self-adhesive labels in roll form as part of our portfolio of solutions to customers" he adds.

Onboard Radius

"When we began our interactions with EFI, they not only made us comfortable by speaking the printers' language, but also understood our specific requirements and ways of working quite easily," Murali explains. "The way they explained the features and possibilities was highly detailed, which also gave us great confidence that we are talking to the right partner for finding a solution that fits our needs, too."

The company took a phased implementation approach and laid great emphasis on getting the basics right in the pilot and user acceptance stages of the project.

"Initially, we set-up a core team, which included EFI consultants and a team that overviewed the entire process vis-a-vis the features to the needs of
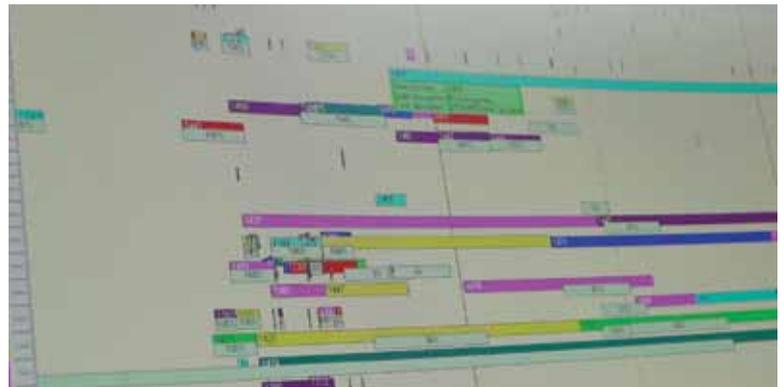
our organisation. The EFI team then followed this up with configuring the modules and functionalities that are relevant to us," explains K Dhanraj, ERP project lead, who was instrumental in coordinating the project from Chromaprint's end.

Implementing Radius in daily tasks

Explaining the implementation process in detail, Dhanraj says, "The pilot phase was a crucial step in the entire timeline for us. The core group of five to six senior members of the company took ownership for the pilot project. It was an eye-opener of sorts because we stumbled upon several process gaps."

"EFI and our team spent a good six months on the pilot phase to ensure we combed out all possible scenarios. We fixed methodologies and worked out use cases and also put them through rigorous testing. It helped us fine-tune our company-specific processes and zero down on the closest-to-nature standard operating procedures," he adds.

Kick-starting work with ERP

"We were a little concerned during the initial stages of training when our substantial list of users who weren't that conversant with technology and software had to be involved," explains Murali. "But, EFI and its consultants made the transition very easy. They trained us in a way that they spoke our language, and ensured our users were comfortable interacting with them. In fact, their support during and post-training was continuous and reassuring to all of us."

EFI Radius Packaging ERP offers core functionality such as job acquisition, estimation, job planning and scheduling, shop floor data collection, supply chain and shipping management, and accounting.

"It covers end-to-end our company's core activities with workflow management that handles all our users needs and activities in the system as well," says Dhanraj.

Chromprint's favourite feature of Radius

Prabhu, who has been part of the core team from the start of implementation exercise, believes that traceability is one of the top benefits that they have drawn from the Radius solution.

"High traceability of inventory and jobs would top my list of benefits. All details and information we need are available at the click of a button," he says.

"Before Radius, the ability to analyse details of a completed job was near impossible and would involve a hunt around the factory to collect various information. Not to mention, the accuracy of the same would be questionable, too," Prabhu explains.

Order management, planning and scheduling, tool management and report analyser were the other features that he believes to have made life simpler for him and the organisation at large.

Getting to the details of each of the features, Prabhu explains, "In terms of order management, Radius has ensured we have seamless access to every order through a comprehensive job ticket, which provides clear information about every last instruction required for successful execution."

"Scheduling is another critical feature. From the time when the supervisor was the only person with the machine schedule details, we have moved to company-wide access to know the status of a job and when can it be expected to be completed in real-time. The same goes for tool management with actionable information, such as tool life, readily available for us," he adds.

The core team emphasised the importance of report analyser, which according to them, helps with decision making and gives a birds-eye view on the performance of a job and company at large.

Features that are loved

Dhanraj feels the Planning and Scheduling Assistant (PSA) with the DCU, which helps them schedule every job and is automatically available in the DCU for their operators, as the top feature in Radius.

"Apart from PSA, every user in the system have their customised workbench widgets, which helps them track information, such as order pending and outstanding, more closely with ease," he explains.

"The master method of working for estimation creation is also helpful since whenever there is a new order or product development, we set it up the first time and the same is used whenever there is a repeat job," Dhanraj adds.

He is also upbeat about EFI communities, which gives them access to a forum to talk to peers and interact with senior members of the EFI team for quicker solutions to queries and problems.

Transformation with Radius

"I must say the primary objective of information transparency and traceability has been achieved. That was something which prompted us to move from a manual process to a system driven approach," says Mathew.

"There was cautious optimism when we began the implementation. But thanks to EFI and its support, we are precisely at the place where we wanted to be. Our delivery commitments are much more accurate. Transparency due to traceability makes sure we are never in a state of darkness in terms of any job," he adds.

Future with Radius

Sharing his thoughts on scaling the ERP and what lies ahead for Chromaprint in terms of automation, Dhanraj says, "The next steps are obvious to us. We are in discussion with the EFIs team to explore the possibilities and have a roadmap in place as well."

"Now that we have captured most of the data points in the system, our next step is to utilise the business intelligence modules available in Radius and get real-time decision support. We also plan to define several KPI's and identify metrics to improve our performance continually," he adds.

According to Dhanraj, several process level upgrades are in the pipeline as well.

"Autocount 4D, which is an updated version of the data collection unit, is something we are looking forward to using," he concludes. ∎