

CASE STUDY

CLIENT: Australian Slate-Crete

INDUSTRY: Manufacturer

LOCATION: Australia

PRODUCT SUITE: EXO Business

MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER: BizPro

Concrete manufacturer finds the right mix in one integrated system

Overview

Australian Slate-Crete (ASC) has been producing high quality concrete products for nearly 20 years. In that time, they've established a reputation for excellence in terms of materials, wear, and finish.

Based in Epping, the company has built up a sound client base across Australia, Asia and Europe. Starting out in Victoria, they expanded to become established agents in NSW and Tasmania, achieved success at various home shows, and then started exporting to Asia and Europe.

Despite that, much of the visibility they needed for the day-to-day running of the business was, until recently, obscured by back-end systems that were not fit for purpose. And that was hindering further growth.

Struggling with stock levels

ASC were using a business management system called Arrow. They'd switched to it from MYOB Premier because they needed software to manage the manufacturing process. But seven years on, Arrow wasn't living up to its promise.

"It was constantly crashing," says general manager Nik Lindstrom. "And it didn't seem to be able to maintain stock levels correctly, which is ironic – given that's what attracted us to Arrow in the first place".

There was another drawback with Arrow, too. It didn't have point of sale (POS) functionality, which meant ASC was forced to use a third-party system.

A good fit

Already familiar with Premier, ASC decided to look at other systems in the MYOB stable. That's when they came across MYOB EXO.

"The more we looked at EXO," says Lindstrom, "the more it seemed to fit with our needs – especially as it would be supported by BizPro; an MYOB partner with experience of stock management and POS".

To make sure EXO was as closely tailored to ASC's needs as it could be, BizPro talked to as many people at the company as possible.

"Everybody was clear about what they wanted and we were able to paint the bigger picture very quickly," says BizPro consultant Daniel Beebee.

"They were great," says Lindstrom of BizPro.

"They told us the implementation could take anywhere up to six months. But we pushed for a shorter time frame and in the end they did it in 10 weeks, which was really impressive."

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Getting things just right

BizPro has made a number of tweaks to EXO for ASC – the most significant of which is creating a low stock alert.

At the moment, this flags up whenever stock is running low. Six months from now, however, it will be able to suggest stock holdings on a season-by-season basis.

“By January,” says Lindstrom, “instead of manually having to look back through the last 12 months to work out an average of what we sold, EXO will be able to spit out a figure for us. It’s going to be able to say ‘this is your seasonal average, so this is how much you need to manufacture in time for next summer’.

“Given that we’re a seasonal business, this is going to be a real bonus.”

Another tweak has been to produce a consignment warehouse report. This extracts stocktake figures at the end of the month for ASC to feed back to their suppliers – again, something that used to be done manually.

Point of sale is a big hit

Staff reaction to EXO has varied, according to the general manager.

“Getting to grips with EXO’s point of sale system was almost instantaneous. Our sales guys at the counter love it, because it’s very simple to use compared with what they were using before.”

Internally, he says the girls in the office took a little longer to adapt – not because EXO is complicated, but because, according to Lindstrom, “Arrow allowed them to get lazy.

“With our previous system, if there was a discrepancy of some sort, it went into the ‘too hard’ file where it was allowed to stay. The difference with EXO is that it’s always cross-checking itself, so you can’t just leave things open ended. That meant the girls had to learn a few new processes.

“Now though, they love it,” he says.

Snapshots of any area of the business

Improvements since installing EXO are there for all to see, according to Lindstrom.

“Right out of the box we’re getting a clearer, quicker picture of where the business is at and what it’s doing,” he says.

“With the old system, everything went to the accountant first and we had to wait for him to report back. With EXO, we can get that information ourselves.”

Lindstrom says there is any number of reports he can dip into to get a snapshot view of how the business is performing.

“I generally look at the sales report once a day, just to see what we’ve sold over the past 24 hours. We run the forecasting stock report weekly, so we know exactly what our stock status is, and what needs to be ordered. We look at the balance sheet and the P&L report pretty frequently too, seeing as we run our business on P&L.”

Paving the way for the future

In the not too distant future, ASC is looking to implement EXO’s new CRM system, and plan on using that to drive their sales and GL budgets.

“We’ll be able to say to our sales reps ‘this is your budget and this is what you’ve achieved, this is your GL budget and this is what you’ve spent’. So we’ll really be able to focus on individual performance.”

ASC is also considering bringing in an e-commerce program, possibly as early as next year.

For now though, Lindstrom is just happy with the improved clarity he’s got right across the business – from POS to stock management and accounting.

“Being able to look at the business and understand it straight away is something every company expects to be able to do. But it’s only possible with the right tools.”



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