Maritime Systems
Relevant™ ERP

Leading Defense Contractors Find Relevant Delivers Superior Project Control Capabilities

Maritime Systems, Inc.

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Summary

UnderSea Sensor Systems Group (USSG), owned by Ultra Electronics Holdings plc of London, UK, has been running Relevant Business Systems enterprise software in sister companies Maritime Systems and UnderSea Sensor Systems Inc. (USSI) since their acquisition. Relevant software, which provides the unparalleled project control required by defense manufacturers, has run error-free year after year.
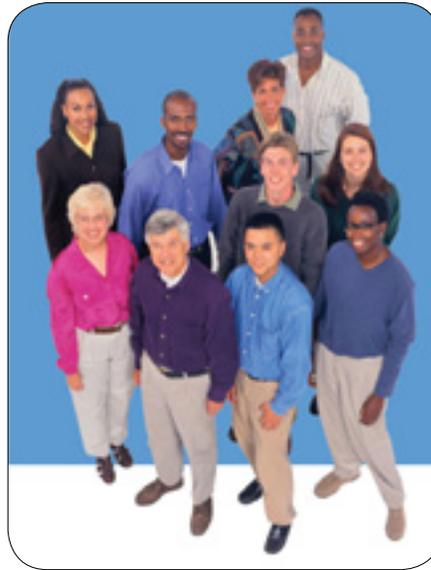
Client Profile

Sixty years ago, the first radio sonarbuoys — miniature sonar systems able to transmit and receive sound energy in the water — were deployed in wartime to detect hostile submarines.

A Nova Scotia company, Maritime Systems (then known as Devtek), was one of the first to produce sonobuoys commercially and remains the world technology leader today.

In 1995, Maritime Systems became the flagship company of the UnderSea Sensor Systems Group. It was joined by US-based USSI in 1998, and, just recently, by Tactical Communications Systems (TCS). Together with its sister companies, Maritime Systems supplies the Departments of Defense of the United States, Canada, France, Spain, England, Australia, Germany, Japan, and other approved nations with over half the world's NATO-compatible passive and active sonobuoy requirements. Maritime Systems, USSI, and TCS share product synergies and complementary customers and, despite national requirements for very separate order and manufacturing processing, the companies require close communication.

USSG maintains manufacturing facilities of close to 100,000 sq ft and employs over 500 engineers, technologists, and production personnel on the North American continent. The manufacturing requirements imposed by producing to both very large contracts and small, quick turn orders, together with the extremely stringent parts tracking required by the various governments, introduces major challenges for any enterprise software system.

ROI at a Glance:

Nova Scotia-based Maritime Systems, supplier of over half the world's NATO-compatible passive and active sonbuoy requirements, realized the following benefits from Relevant ERP:

- Seamless adaptability during business fluctuations.
- Reliable performance with no downtime, crashes or integration issues.
- Strong material and configuration control.

Consona™

Business Requirements

When Maritime Systems decided it had outgrown its internally developed system, members of the team investigating new enterprise software believed that the new system had to deliver flawlessly against:

- **Purchasing and materials control by project**: Government contracts require purchasing and inventory to be maintained by individual customer and project. But many of Maritime Systems' customers' products are largely identical, with differentiation occurring late in the manufacturing process. To remain competitive, Maritime Systems needs to purchase in bulk and, frequently, to produce subassemblies to stock. Maritime Systems wanted software that would allow them to achieve economies while rigid materials tracking required by individual governments.

- **Project planning and control**: Maritime Systems works to tight margins and faces significant lead times on many components. The company was looking for project planning that was completely integrated and would help them achieve the superior order timing and project execution they felt they would need to retain their position as market leader.

- **Scalability**: As a defense supplier, Maritime Systems lives in a boom or bust environment. A key Maritime Systems requirement was that the enterprise software have an ability to quickly and seamlessly adapt to large swings in sales and handle the associated additional transactional volume without overtaxing the financial modules.

The Solution

Relevant's track record with many Department of Defense suppliers attracted Tony MacKay, Maritime Systems' Controller and a key member of the original implementation team. "Relevant's strong material and configuration control was critical for us. The project control module was fully integrated with the manufacturing modules, including inventory control, purchasing, sales order management, shop floor control, MRP and manufacturing control. We believed that integration would give us the capability to achieve much greater project control – and it has."

"The basic product configuration was well suited to Maritime Systems' defense-oriented needs, and that original configuration has supported the company for over eight years." MacKay states, "We installed the product pretty much out of the box, with very little customization." After eight years, MacKay is beginning to think about some of Relevant's more advanced features, including the Work Breakdown Structure and Order Entry modules, which he believes will help Maritime Systems achieve greater cost control and more streamlined customer service.

Maritime Systems has had several opportunities to verify that Relevant is as flexible as promised. According to MacKay, "A couple of years ago, we doubled sales practically overnight. Although the strain was felt in many areas in the organization, our Relevant system didn't hiccup. Business fluctuations have been handled with grace." Maritime Systems has also been impressed with Relevant's error-free performance. MacKay adds, "Since our original installation, we have not had one adverse business event due to Relevant software: no crashes, no downtime, no issues with integration at all."