

# Peatey's

## COMPANY DESCRIPTION:

Peatey's Painting Services is one of the UK's leading paint and powder coatings contractors. The company provides its customers with a wide range of finishes for metal and UPVC, applied as coatings in the factory or on the customer's site. Peatey's specialises in applying aesthetic and protective paint and powder finishes to metal and UPVC in the factory for architectural, industrial, retail and commercial, public and private, and domestic items, while on site they repair and renew finishes on new and old buildings, equipment and plant.

## PARTNER:

Raven Computers Ltd

## SECTOR:

Manufacturing

## PRODUCT:

Microsoft® Business Solutions–Axapta®

## CHALLENGE:

Peatey's operates at a traditionally low-tech end of the manufacturing sector. The work is very labour-intensive, but requires a fast turn around.

Twelve to 24 hour turnarounds are the norm, for up to 70 jobs a day, in different colours and for different items, while requiring quality control, traceability and accountability throughout the process. Like any business in the UK manufacturing sector, Peatey's is under pressure to compete with cheap overseas labour, a situation further exacerbated as the company operates in a mature market. This means maintaining control of all costs is vitally important, as is the ability to remain flexible and turn orders around rapidly to maintain customer satisfaction.

## SOLUTION:

Microsoft Axapta offers a single, stable platform that can be used to bring all aspects of Peatey's business together; delivering management information in real-time to help the company remain competitive.

## BENEFITS:

- Transformation of loss-making business into a thriving, growing profitable company
- Helping Peatey's secure its future
- Seamless view of data from all across the organisation

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

Anyone who reads a newspaper or watches the TV news will know that the UK manufacturing sector has been under pressure for what must feel to those in the industry like a lifetime. Foreign currency fluctuations, overseas competitors with much lower labour costs and a cultural shift in the UK which has meant engineering and manufacturing jobs, even at the highest levels, no longer command the respect they once did; all this and more has combined to make the former engine room of the economy suffer repeatedly.

Some parts of the UK manufacturing sector have embraced technology; the car industry was one of the first to do so. But the potential benefits of using technology have not always been apparent, especially in the lower end of the sector where the pressures on margins and overheads can be felt all the more acutely.

Peatey's is a specialist paint and powder-finishing firm that applies coats of paint to metal and UPVC on a sub-contract basis for 200 customers who manufacture elsewhere. It offers a wide range of different finishes both in powder coating form and

as wet paint and is able to give its customers a high-quality finish thanks to the careful preparation and pre-treatment of the substrate. Examples of the type of finish Peatey's provides include, metallic or fluorescent finishes, anti-graffiti, anti-condensation, high build protective finishes and wood effects.

This is a line of business that has typically been viewed as low-end work with little or no value-add. As such it has been slow to respond to the potential benefits that investing in IT can bring. Yet Peatey's stands out as being different; realising that the future had to be planned for, Peatey's managing director, Ruth Chapman, had a vision of how technology could revolutionise the way her business uses information.

Any ERP system that was going to meet Peatey's requirements would need to be flexible, robust, simple to use and quick to deploy; this was more than a back-office application implementation – this project was going to change Peatey's operational structure. Plus it was going to have to work in conjunction with the computers being used on the shop-floor.

Chapman says: “I wanted a system that had the flexibility to grow with us. That could cope with multiple sites and with acquisitions – one single system for the entire business with no duplication of effort or overhead.”

#### **SOLUTION:**

Peatey’s operates in a very labour-intensive market. For any software solution to stand a chance of being taken seriously it would need to be extremely economical to deploy and use, and if it didn’t have a significant positive impact on the bottom line then it would never work.

Peatey’s MD, Ruth Chapman, had a vision for Peatey’s. That vision was to transform what had become a struggling manufacturing business in a less-than-glamorous sector into a hi-tech success story. When she saw Raven Computers give a demonstration of Microsoft Axapta, she instantly saw its potential to transform her business. “I couldn’t quite believe what I was seeing,” she says. “It was exactly what we needed.”

Raven had supplied Peatey’s with its previous financial software package and the link between the two companies soon grew stronger. “Raven are a great organisation for getting right into your business and gaining a full understanding of what you do and what you need. Then they use their skills to bring it all together. It has been excellent working with Raven and having access to people who understood my vision for changing our business, and who could bring that vision to life.”

This could only come about thanks to the dedication of the team at Peatey’s, the skills and experience of the consultants at Raven and the capabilities of Microsoft Axapta.

“Microsoft Axapta has turned us from a loss-maker into a thriving, growing, profitable business,” Chapman stresses. “For a small business like us the use of technology means we can secure our future: be lean, efficient, and competitive,” she continues.

Not only has the company had to adapt to using Microsoft Axapta, but its shop-floor staff are now using computers as part of the way

they operate – for some this is the first time they have used computers at work. This has been a significant all-round change for Peatey’s. When deliveries come in to be worked on, Peatey’s staff are putting information directly into the new Microsoft Axapta system as soon as the materials hit the shop-floor. This speeds up the time in which an order can be processed. It also gives Peatey’s the most accurate picture of operations possible.

It has also helped to alleviate duplication of effort, which has saved both time and money.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Ruth Chapman had a vision for deploying technology across her company and now that vision has become a reality. With Microsoft Axapta on board there has been a significant change in Peatey’s fortunes and in the way it operates. “This has long been regarded as a low-grade, labour intensive occupation but technology can make a massive contribution, it’s a big improvement to the way a business runs and an improvement in individuals’ jobs,” Chapman says.

Microsoft Axapta is helping Peatey’s plan for the short term and the long term. It is a business with seasonal peaks and troughs, but thanks to the new Microsoft Axapta system Peatey’s has become a leaner, more efficient organisation.

For the longer term, Ruth Chapman is clearly developing another strategic vision for the company. “We’ve been so thrilled with the way the new system has worked that we are now thinking of using mobile computers, linked to Microsoft Axapta, in our vans.” she says.

#### **ABOUT RAVEN COMPUTERS**

Raven Computers Ltd is one of the UK’s leading providers of Microsoft-based solutions and E-Commerce. With a background in providing ERP solutions to the Construction and Service industries and years of experience in the development and customisation of Microsoft Business Solutions–Axapta Raven is able to provide the best service to support the business needs of its customers.

[www.microsoft.com/uk/businesssolutions](http://www.microsoft.com/uk/businesssolutions)

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