

Electronics manufacturer Harwin PLC maintains growth and looks to Industry 4.0 using IFS



Seamless integration, zero modifications, centralized real-time reporting, data insight and greater operational transparency with IFS have all enabled Harwin PLC to sustain a 20% year-on-year growth trajectory.

Offering EN 9100:2018 / AS9100D quality certification for aerospace, aviation and defense applications, Harwin produces high reliability, industry standard interconnect devices and PCB hardware. Like many manufacturers, Harwin has had to deal with market volatility over recent years due to events including Brexit, the pandemic, unrest in other countries, and supply chain issues. However, the biggest headache for the company derives from its continued success. Simon Stairs, Harwin's Group Financial Controller and Enterprise Services Manager, explains: "Our biggest challenges as a company over the last couple of years have been around growth: planning for the growth, managing the growth, and being able to forecast how to deliver this growth. It became clear back in late 2017 that our legacy system would not have enabled us to achieve that level of growth. So that was one of the triggers that we used to start searching for a new solution."

Deciding factors: transparency with ease

As part of the selection process, Stair's team went out to tender with some 10 ERP vendors. "We shortlisted that down to five, ran demonstrations with three and, following site visits, it became very clear that IFS would be the solution for us," he says.

Alongside a small base of customers it serves directly, Harwin's business model is to sell into a global distribution network supporting some 60,000 end customers. Observes Stairs, "The main factor driving our choice of IFS was how transparent and easy to navigate the system was. The software's ability to integrate seamlessly with all our different systems meant we had access to a wealth of new operational detail we could start to investigate and analyze. It created one version of the truth in real time," he says.

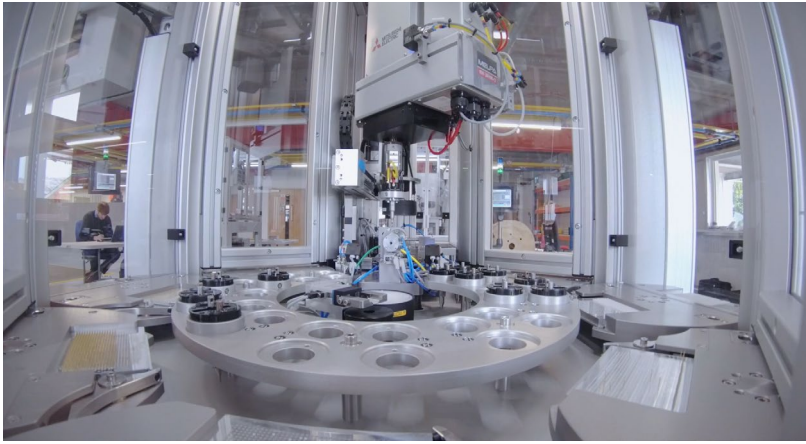
About Harwin PLC

Formed in 1952, Harwin is a global manufacturer of high reliability, industry standard interconnect devices and PCB hardware. With a network of distributors and facilities in the USA, UK, Germany, France and Singapore, Harwin has a portfolio of 20,000 interconnects and PCB components.

Headquartered in Portsmouth, UK, the company employs 300 staff across the group.

HARWIN





The company has been running IFS since 2019, with the solution now serving group companies across the UK, Singapore, and America. 165 IFS modules are installed, spanning finance, supply chain, service and maintenance, and HR. Explains Stairs, “Of our 300 group employees, 240 are already using IFS, and we’ll onboard the rest as we roll out further functionality. We now have the transparency and visibility we needed. Thanks to Boomi middleware, we will soon begin to integrate our machines directly into IFS, to move towards Industry 4.0 and smart manufacture.”

Greater productivity through data

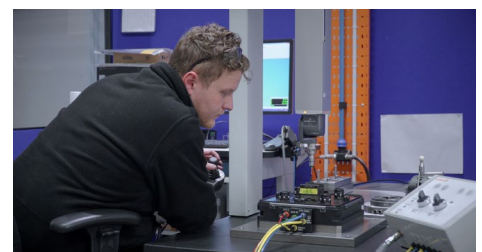
The company believes employees have become far more productive since embracing IFS. Explains Jon Dean, Production Systems Executive at Harwin, “Now machinery and equipment data is visible in real time, so we can rapidly direct resources to where they’re required. IFS delivers utilization, efficiency, and downtime reports, all used by everybody in the factory. We are pretty much live reporting what’s happening on the shop floor. It’s a very powerful tool,” says Dean.

Supporting innovation

Dean has also seen the benefit of IFS supporting the introduction of new products. He explains, “In our turning department, for instance, we’ve been able to allocate resources that we can direct just towards new types of products, along with the labor resources required. That way, when we look at the whole department, we can see everything that’s going on, yet still independently control new product introductions.”

Benefits seen using IFS

- Multi-site, multi-country information held in a single system
- Granular data visibility of manufacturing processes and performance
- Agility and insight to manage rapid growth
- Increased employee productivity
- Accurate planning for new product introductions
- Standard core – no modifications to maintain
- Connectivity for Industry 4.0
- Seamless integration to existing tools and solutions via Boomi



Zero modifications

One of the reasons the company elected to implement IFS was the ability to avoid the need for any custom modifications. Explains Stairs, “The IFS release we run is completely standard, straight out of the box. Since implementation, we haven’t needed to modify it in any way.

“It’s helped drive through some efficiencies and process changes and ensures that every time we do an update or upgrade, we can take standard functionality. We’ve successfully completed three updates, using the same consistent testing program every single time,” he says.

With a dedicated internal project team at Harwin working alongside IFS, the implementation to go-live took in the region of 12 months. Comments Stairs, “There are always going to be some minor post-implementation issues, but there’s been nothing we haven’t been able to resolve. In all I think it’s taken around 12 months to fully stabilize, and the absence of any modifications has helped that. We now have a solid foundation now to start our journey to the Cloud,” he says.

Implementing IFS

What advice would Stairs offer manufacturers implementing IFS? “I think that it’s very important not to underestimate the importance of testing and training. It’s critical for users to understand how to interact with the system and transact in their role on a day-to-day basis,” advises Stairs.

Moment of Service™

Dean is clear how IFS has enabled Harwin to deliver its moment of service to customers. “IFS has given us instant access to live actionable data, which we’ve used to control our business for the last three to four years,” he says. “We’ve been experiencing rapid growth, 20% year-on-year, and without adopting IFS we could not maintain that trajectory. It absolutely enables the five rights of procurement: quality, quantity, price, place, and delivery. It’s delivered everything we wanted since we first installed it,” he concludes.

An exciting future

Looking ahead, plans at Harwin are exciting. “We’re currently undergoing three or four projects around forecasting, service and maintenance,” says Stairs. “Once we’ve delivered those, then we’ll start our journey to the cloud. That will include integrating our machines, allowing us to plan, order, plan capacity and forecast effectively. We’ve enjoyed working collaboratively with IFS, and we’re really looking forward to where this will take us as a business,” he adds.



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**Jon Dean, Senior Manager,
Production Systems Executive,
Harwin PLC**

Find out more

Further information contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, ifs.com

