

How to create effective cost control: why ICON Digital decided to replace their old ERP system with LiftERP



Mariusz Kolaszewski
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What happens when your ERP doesn't deliver?

Icon Digital focuses on All Things Visual, to help brands create remarkable moments by integrating digital (ICON Media) and physical spaces (ICON Visual). The company specialises in creating immersive environments through display graphics and have made their solutions even more compelling with the acquisition of a digital display and media company.

But the 25-year-old company was facing a problem. Their previous ERP system was not giving them the information that was essential to running their business it was stuck in the past. We spoke to Mariusz Kolaszewski, Systems Manager, to find out more:

“Our system was lacking proper estimating for the variety of Large Format Printing we do today. The old system was based on some averages that we came up with, so our costs were not accurate when we entered estimates. Also, the system was not connected to production, which meant that at any point, anyone could change the costing or pricing on a docket of an order already in production and we had no way of tracking the changes. Even invoices were at risk. Loopholes were exploited and we needed more control and tracking capabilities.

Our industry is a mature industry: there's really little margin to play with here, so every dollar counts. We needed to make sure that we captured all costs, our reports were accurate, and that we could make proper predictions moving forward.”

This wasn't the only issue with the legacy system: “It was hosted on our premises, so people had to remote to it, via LogMeIn for example. This was causing all kinds of headaches.”

The old system

- Inaccurate costing system for producing estimates
- Anyone could make un-tracked changes to job documents
- Remote login was problematic

LiftERP's solution

- Flexible costing module with a range of price-estimating options
- Comprehensive user permissions that avoid unwanted changes
- Cloud-based hosting and mobile-friendly screens

The results

- Increased efficiency thanks to instant views of relevant information and action points
- Lightning-fast onboarding of new users
- Totally scalable solution

When the company looked at LiftERP, they saw a very different way to manage the business

LiftERP offers one single integrated platform so that each module can communicate seamlessly with the next one. One of the key strategies of the system is that users are given permissions rules on what they can and cannot do - all changes are recorded and unauthorised changes cannot be made. The LiftERP system is cloud-based, so our entire team has access and there are no hosting or remote login issues.

We designed the estimating module to be incredibly flexible, allowing costing choices based on machine throughput, labour and materials; we're really proud of how the module turned out. The costing choices, combined with options for cost plus pricing, dynamic mark-up and discounting tools, can be applied at the quote header and line level.

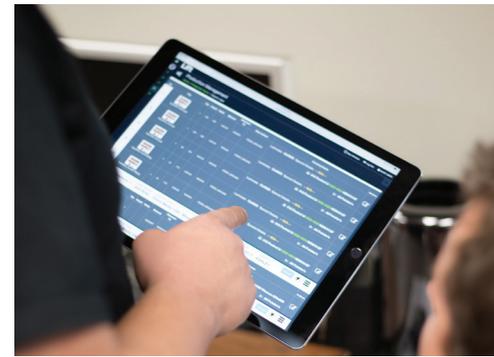
Mariusz continues: "We feel like there's one source of truth now with LiftERP. Everything is streamlined as opposed to siloed out as it was before. And our CEO fell in love with the interface!"

At LiftSoftware, we understand the need for increasing remote and mobile working and built an intuitive system that features mobile-friendly screens for all types of devices. From the top-level production dashboard, users can easily dive down into the details that they need to see - all in real time - giving you the decision-making information that you need.

So how did LiftSoftware's promises turn out in reality?

By taking ICON's requirements, we implemented their system to deliver exactly what was needed. Mariusz was delighted. "I have to say, I did not imagine the go-live to happen as smoothly as it did. A lot of people were still holding onto old bad habits from the previous system, so I was a little concerned that they wouldn't be able to let them go. But everybody jumped on board pretty quickly. I think that's a testament to how intuitive LiftERP truly is.

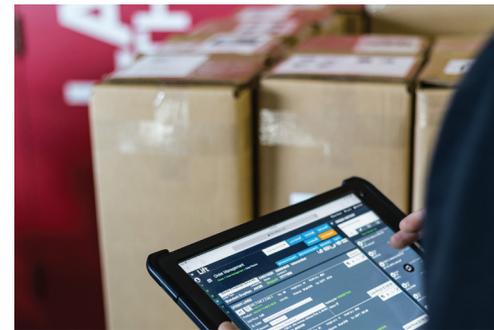
If I were to highlight one thing, I guess the best bit throughout this is how easy it was for me to onboard new users. For example, on the previous system, I could be on there for a week training somebody and they still would be scratching their head trying to figure it all out. It took me half an hour to explain LiftERP to one of our co-founders - and he was up and running. He said, "Okay, that's all I need, I think I can figure this out." There are some users who are a little bit more technologically challenged, but it literally took me just three hours to onboard them."



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Mariusz is also delighted with the ongoing support from the development team: “They are very responsive and they just care about providing a solution to a problem. I think that’s the great part: that I don’t feel like I’m alone at this. If there’s an issue, somebody is there to fix it within a day or two.”

The implementation of LiftERP has made a big difference to ICON

“We’re more efficient because people know where to get their information, as opposed to trying to email this person and that person to find it. All the information is now in one system and processes are a lot more streamlined for everyone.”

Lift has focused on pushing the right information to relevant users so that everyone knows exactly what they have to action straight away. The right people have an instant view of the current state of production and production trends, and can easily pinpoint bottlenecks and take appropriate actions. In addition, users can subscribe to real-time notifications - triggered by events in the system and filtered according to the needs of the user, so they are no longer distracted by information not immediately relevant to them.

Mariusz is also confident that the current team will be able to handle the company’s growing business using existing resources. “A big issue for me was that we were constantly dealing with cracks. If there was a problem, we would hire more people to catch the drips. Thanks to LiftERP, we can actually be more efficient - and stop putting buckets under leaks.”

What is one functionality that stands out to Mariusz?

“Well, I would say the estimating module. The fact that our sales people can be onboarded so quickly is a huge benefit and competitive advantage. Lift drives volume: it’s just so easy to place orders.”

One of the key features of Lift is how easy it is for any user to create estimates and orders quickly and simply: you don’t need to be a technical wizard to service a customer quickly! The system is designed to lead users intuitively through the process so that no information is forgotten. And there is also a powerful catalogue feature allowing for the instant pricing, ordering and re-ordering of standard items. Standard orders and re-orders can be managed by the printing companies or by the customer directly. This makes life much more efficient for sales and estimating teams - and in turn, their customers.

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Sales reps can also subscribe to notifications so that they know exactly what is happening to their orders. If a company wishes, these notifications can also be sent directly to customers.

Mariusz is also excited about the API availability. “We needed an executive dashboard formatted for the way we do business and to present data to the executives the way they want to see it. LiftERP provided the API for that, I built the dashboard, and the executives are absolutely ecstatic about it.

It’s little things like that that help us see just where else we can take LiftERP. Everyone’s excited about the fact that someone is able to build an extension of LiftERP, based on the data that it provides. Having an ERP that is online with API access also allows us to integrate with various other subsystems that we have.”

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Why would ICON be prepared to recommend LiftSoftware to other companies?

“There are lots of businesses out there that say, “Your business is our business” and they don’t really mean that. But I think in this case, LiftSoftware does. With LiftERP, they DO care.”



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