

**Comace Pty Ltd**

8 Denis Street St Marys SA 5042

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ACN 056 059 266

10 November 2009

To other manufacturers

**Re: Case Study on Empower Software at Comace - Interior fitouts**

Comace is based in Adelaide, have been in business coming up 29 years and we currently employ 25 staff. We have three divisions to our business, namely; Commercial Joinery, Maintenance and Construction. We installed PCs on the factory floor and Empower time tracking software coming up three years ago. Within approximately three months of using Empower our factory productivity increased 30%.

As a manufacturer our core business is labour management. Empower is the most important software in our business as it manages and maximizes labour productivity of all our factory staff and our site installers. Acknowledging that our labour productivity is the single largest factor that determines profitability on all jobs and ultimately our annual profit.

All staff on the factory floor have their jobs assigned to them on their factory PC screens. We have three PCs in our factory one in the machining area, one in the assembly area and in our dispatch area. Any staff member can walk up to and use any factory PC to log onto their jobs. On the factory PC screens staff see:

The list and pile of jobs ahead of them [This is good because it makes staff appreciate there is a *mountain of coal* to get through today so keep focused]

The budgeted time they have for the next job [This is good because they have an actual goal to meet so they need to get onto it quickly, cannot waste time, need to think the job through and they need to work consistently]

The time they took when they finish that job [This is good because it makes staff aware of their times on every single job throughout the day and throughout the week so they can manage their own jobs, their own output and their own productivity]

In summary, all my factory staff use Empower as their own tool to bring their own jobs in on budgeted time. On our office PCs our production management team monitor and see all jobs progressing live and ensure jobs are completed on budgeted time. My costing and pricing team uses the Empower history of actual and budgeted times on previous jobs when determining estimated costing for new quotations. Reference to our history of accurate times on previous jobs is invaluable to us in keeping our costing and pricing consistent.

Cont Page two

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## Page Two

We used manual time cards for many years which factory staff filled in at the end of the day and the end of the week which were mainly non sense and a mostly a waste of time filling in, collecting, trying to decipher what staff had written, putting into our costing program, and talking about times to staff, at best several days later, when it was too late anyway. We have certainly taken our business to a new level of commitment and professionalism using PCs on the factory floor and time tracking software.

Comace's investment in software;

Cabinet Design Cost Machine Software	60,000
Finance Software	55,000
Empower	14,000

The production gains and additional profitability Empower has generated for our business is far greater than any other software or any CNC machine that we use.

As an example in one area Empower has generated us approximately twenty five additional production hours per week simply by keeping factory staff working promptly six times a day at day start, start of smoko, end of smoko, start of lunch, end of lunch and day end. Prior to using Empower like most factories we were losing at least 30 minutes per staff member per day to staff NOT working promptly at these six times a day. Our 30 plus minutes per staff member per day was 2.5 plus hours per staff member per week which across 10 staff totalled 25 plus production hours being lost each and every week. Empower stopped this lost production time which has a value to us of \$1500 per week [25 production hours at \$60 an hour overhead cost]. In this one area alone Empower would have paid for itself fully in our factory within nine or ten weeks. That is, before Empower maximised production and productivity of all jobs and all staff in every hour of our 38 hour working week.

Empower is great for staff performance reviews as *the numbers* are highly accurate, they are *their numbers* and an objective and constructive conversation about *their numbers* can occur between production management and staff. There are no personalities, gut feelings or guess work involved. Empower reports on the following staff performance can be discussed; promptness working, their time on downtime compared to their budgeted time, their times on jobs and processes compared to budgeted time, and rework hours to name a few. Empower is great when employing new staff as we advise new staff that the budgeted times on the PC screens are the achieved times of their work mates on the factory floor and within three to four weeks of settling in they should be meeting those times. If there are any performance issues with new staff we can identify this within the first two weeks and commence discussions and management can provide any required direction and assistance.

Implementation of Empower into our business was straight forward. The owners of Empower carried out the training of factory staff and management on site and installed the software which went seamlessly.

Cont Page three

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## Page three

Initially there were grumbles from a couple of my factory staff about Empower but that was more to do with *the unknown* and not *conversant to change*. Last month I held performance reviews with all factory staff and there was not one mention about Empower being an issue. Empower has actually had a positive impact on factory staff as they use Empower as their tool and they work together productively as a team.

Over the last three years our on going support from the Empower team has been and is second to none. Only occasionally if a fix is required Empower drop everything and fix it. When we require training or developments we get support promptly. Most of our support is across the web PC to PC which is highly efficient and effective. The owners and directors of Empower are regularly on site in our business assisting us with; on going training, auditing our business, organizing user group meetings with ourselves and other Empower manufacturers, and working with myself and our management team. The owners and directors of Empower have a real depth of experience in and knowledge of manufacturing and cabinetmaking and this is valuable to us. We receive quarterly upgrades of new software and there is continually new and good developments coming through to us. We pay a capped weekly amount for all this support from Empower and when considering this on an hourly rate this is excellent value for us.

As an Empower Software user, among all others manufacturers who use Empower, it's like being in a large manufacturers' productivity club. All our individual ideas for improvements and additions *go into the boiling pot* and we all benefit when the developments come back to all of us in new software received every quarter.

We will shortly be extending Empower to time track all our management and office staff in the offices. Empower will track and report their work efforts on each client project and each of our main administration work areas for example OH & S and finance. We are confident that the same substantial lift is our work focus and productivity that Empower achieved with our factory staff in the factory will also occur with management and office staff in our offices. This will generate us substantial additional cost savings.

Empower has made a huge improvement to our business, productivity and profitability and we would not be without it. To sum it up, Empower has proved to us to be a serious money making tool.

I am happy to write the above because Empower has been excellent for my business.  
I welcome phone calls from anyone to discuss further.

Yours faithfully

**PAUL WILLIAMS**

Managing Director

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