



Pace Industries, Inc.



Industry

Die Casting

Products

Odyssey ERP

Summary

Pace Industries, Inc. relies on the Odyssey enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution to manage almost every aspect of its operations, enabling the company to run more agile, transparent and efficient operations across all 15 of its manufacturing plants.

Pace Industries Optimizes Operations with the Odyssey ERP System

Pace Industries, Inc. is North America's leading full-service die casting manufacturer of aluminum, zinc and magnesium, as well as a solution-provider offering a wide array of manufacturing capabilities and engineering services to its customers. Headquartered in Fayetteville, Arkansas, the company has 15 manufacturing plants strategically located throughout North America.

For over 20 years, Pace Industries has relied on software solutions from B&L Information Systems to help maintain unparalleled customer satisfaction through world-class quality, delivery and value. Five years ago, the die casting leader decided to move away from the legacy B&L enterprise resource planning (ERP) software solution, BLIS, running on the outdated AS/400 to implement B&L's latest ERP solution, cloud-based Odyssey.

With Odyssey supporting almost every aspect of Pace Industries' operations from forecasting through shipping, this move has enabled the industry leader to run more agile, transparent and efficient operations across all 15 of its manufacturing plants.

Mike Harney, VP of IT for Pace Industries, explains that there were a number of considerations that factored into their decision to choose Odyssey. For one, the company didn't want to lose any of its valuable historical data.

“We had close to 20 years of data in our old BLIS system. If we had gone with another ERP system, outside of Odyssey, our data could have been gutted. Not to mention the cost of other leading ERP systems, when compared to Odyssey, was outrageous.”

Pace Industries liked that Odyssey is a cloud-based system designed specifically for the die casting industry. As a distributed business, the company no longer has to worry about setting up hardware and software or managing updates and backups at each individual location. B&L takes care of all of that.

“What B&L has done with Odyssey has allowed us to not worry about the general product life cycle, because it’s built into the software,” explains Kevin Davison, Lead Cost Accountant for Pace Industries. “They free up our resources to use the information in Odyssey to continuously improve our business and focus on the things that make Pace unique.”

Harney says their existing relationship with B&L Information Systems played a major role in their decision. “We have always had a very good relationship with B&L. They’re committed to our ongoing success, they understand the complexity of our business, and they make us feel like a priority.”

Blueprint for a Successful, Multi-plant Implementation

Terry Clark, Director - System Implementation & Training for Pace Industries, was brought on board to manage the multi-plant Odyssey implementation. Together with his team, Clark rolled Odyssey out to all 15 plants over four years. The longest implementation took three months; the shortest took just one month.

One of Clark’s primary goals for the implementation was to standardize how operations and processes were managed across all of the plants. He performed a job impact analysis to identify the different areas of the business that would be most impacted by a software change. He then met every month with the executive team and those business stakeholders impacted to identify what reports, work streams and processes they needed to put in place, KPIs they should be measuring, things they needed to change, and more.

He and his team implemented Odyssey at each plant and standardized operations across all of the divisions. Not only would this change optimize operations, but it would also yield a single source of truth for reporting for all of Pace Industries, providing full transparency into company-wide KPIs.

Multi-plant Benefits of Odyssey

- One source for customer and supplier information
- Consolidated financials including accounts payable, cash and receipts
- Intracompany transfer available
- Standardized processes

Harney says their level of access to B&L resources was key to their successful transition from BLIS to Odyssey. “Our interaction with B&L during this time was key to our quick time to implement. We were given access to experts across B&L, not just to a single consultant. We had one-to-one conversations with their financial side, R&D departments, and more. It’s been a great partnership. Their support and expertise in our industry have been invaluable.”

Today, Pace Industries is using Odyssey as a full end-to-end ERP solution across its entire business to manage its:

- Manufacturing—production scheduling, shop floor management, shipping and maintenance management
- Sales—quoting, ecommerce/EDI, order processing and forecasting
- Inventory—product and materials inventory and purchasing
- Quality—scrap control, returns and hold tracking, corrective action reporting, heat analysis & lot tracking and metal certifications
- Finance—invoicing, standard costs, accounts receivable, accounts payable, general ledger and job costing
- Data Analytics—dashboard and KPIs and the ability to import and export data

Benefits of Odyssey

Since implementing Odyssey, Pace Industries has realized significant efficiency, productivity and quality benefits across every area of its business.

Odyssey’s real-time reporting has been one of the most significant outcomes in Clark’s opinion. “One of my first priorities was to make sure that we could immediately

measure our KPIs by division and company-wide. When we moved to Odyssey, we went from having 6,000 reports that were all similar to one another, but didn't offer centralized performance visibility, down to 340 reports that give our managers and executives real-time access to both plant-level and business-wide metrics."

To make sure the company is measuring the correct KPIs, the relevant business stakeholders must approve new reports before they can be rolled out to each division. This ensures they are measuring the correct things while continuing to ensure company standardization and a single version of the truth across all plants.

Managers and executives analyze KPIs within the Odyssey dashboard on a daily, weekly and all-the-time basis, not just by division, but company-wide to find out where they're hitting their goals and driving efficiency and where they need to make improvements.

"We can instantly measure efficiency, utilization of equipment, downtime, on-time delivery, and so much more," explains Clark. "On-demand access to this level of information enables us to act smarter and faster so we can be more proactive than reactive. It allows our supervisors and managers to be out there managing as opposed to firefighting."

"The one comment I've always made to anybody when they ask why we're not using one of the main-stream ERP solutions, is that they aren't designed for our business. They don't offer many of the critical features we need as a die caster, which means we would have to spend big money."

—Mike Harney, VP of IT for Pace Industries

Empowering Individual Plants to Succeed

Clark says Odyssey is empowering the individual Pace plants to make their own improvements using real-time information.

"The plants are closer to the data than corporate and are increasingly willing to react faster than they were in the past. They no longer simply wait for us to look at the KPIs and request changes. They have access to the same data in the Odyssey dashboard and now take it upon themselves to make changes to improve their own operations." Clark expects this trend will accelerate across the plants over time.



Since using Odyssey, plants are also sharing best practices with one another. "Now that the plants are more empowered to analyze their own performance data so they can optimize operations, we see plants sharing lessons learned and giving advice to one another," says Harney. "They are even going as far as sending their own people to other plants to provide support and training. It's fantastic to see all of our divisions starting to work more closely together. This is a huge benefit of using Odyssey."

Running a More Agile and Efficient Business with Standardization

For Pace, standardizing processes using Odyssey has yielded tremendous benefits to the organization. Prior to using the solution, there were no documented processes for how workers should perform different operations. Essentially, the person doing the training was the only one that knew what to do when issues arose. Pace also lacked real-time visibility into performance data.

"Now, we are all on the same page," says Clark.

"Everyone, across our headquarters and each plant, is using the same processes, workflows, reports, and more. That has streamlined how Pace operates and given us detailed, trustworthy KPI information we can use to continuously improve our business."

Pace Industries' Advice to Other Die Casters

While there are plenty of other ERP solutions on the market, Harney says Odyssey is the only solution created specifically for the die casting and foundry industries.

"The one comment I've always made to anybody when they ask why we're not using one of the main-stream ERP solutions, is that they aren't designed for our business. They don't offer many of the critical features we need as a die caster, which means we would have to spend big money, not to mention time, for customizations."

“With other solutions, you can spend millions and millions and you'll still be trying to implement. With Odyssey, you just need to get your data in there and you're up and running. So, the question I might ask other die casters is: 'Why aren't you using it?.'”

— Terry Clark, Director - System Implementation & Training for Pace Industries



“On the other hand, B&L is devoted to serving the die casting and foundry sectors of manufacturing,” continues Harney. “They are experts in that industry and focus 100% of their efforts to helping businesses just like ours. B&L has designed their software specific to our industry; whether we're talking about tools, inserts, the shop, and those types of things. And they've continued to grow with the industry. From the backend functionality to the cloud-based UI, B&L continuously invests in Odyssey to ensure it meets the needs of a modern business.”

“I worked with PeopleSoft, I worked with SAP for many years. Odyssey has beaten the market,” says Clark “I feel like it was built by us, for us. It's a great product. The designers are very knowledgeable, and they work to

continue to improve the solution. Twice a year, they're putting out new versions and those are based on feedback and enhancement requests from customers. Our business and our needs are what drive product development.”

“With other solutions, you can spend millions and millions, which we don't have, and you'll still be trying to implement. With Odyssey, you just need to get your data in there and you're up and running. So, the question I might ask is: 'Why aren't you using it?.'”

Harney agrees with Clark, “If you're in die casting, whether you're in aluminum, zinc, magnesium or if you're a foundry, and you're looking for an ERP software solution, Odyssey is the software you'd want to choose.”

Odyssey Features Specific to Die Casting

At the heart of quality die castings is the tooling and die cast machine, and all the quality and business processes supporting them. Odyssey helps die casters monitor tooling cycles down to the cavity level and provides notifications when thresholds are exceeded. Managing post-casting operations of parts, including internal and out-sourced machining, painting, anodizing, etc. is an integrated part of the Odyssey ERP system.

About B&L Information Systems

B&L Information Systems is a global leader in providing integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) for metalcasters. Since 1976, B&L has used their deep understanding of the specific challenges and problems of foundries and die casters to create an ERP solution which matches the way metalcasters operate, making it easier to learn and use. With Odyssey, metalcasters will maximize their resources, minimize costs, and make better decisions faster. www.blinfo.com

About Progress Software Corporation

Odyssey SaaS is based on the Progress Software Corporation's OpenEdge application development platform, an unbreakable technology platform that has been powering over 47,000 businesses for more than 30 years. By focusing on factors such as performance, cost, reliability, scalability and ease of maintenance, Progress Software enables B&L to focus its efforts on functionality, trends, and metalcasting industry best practices. www.progress.com

