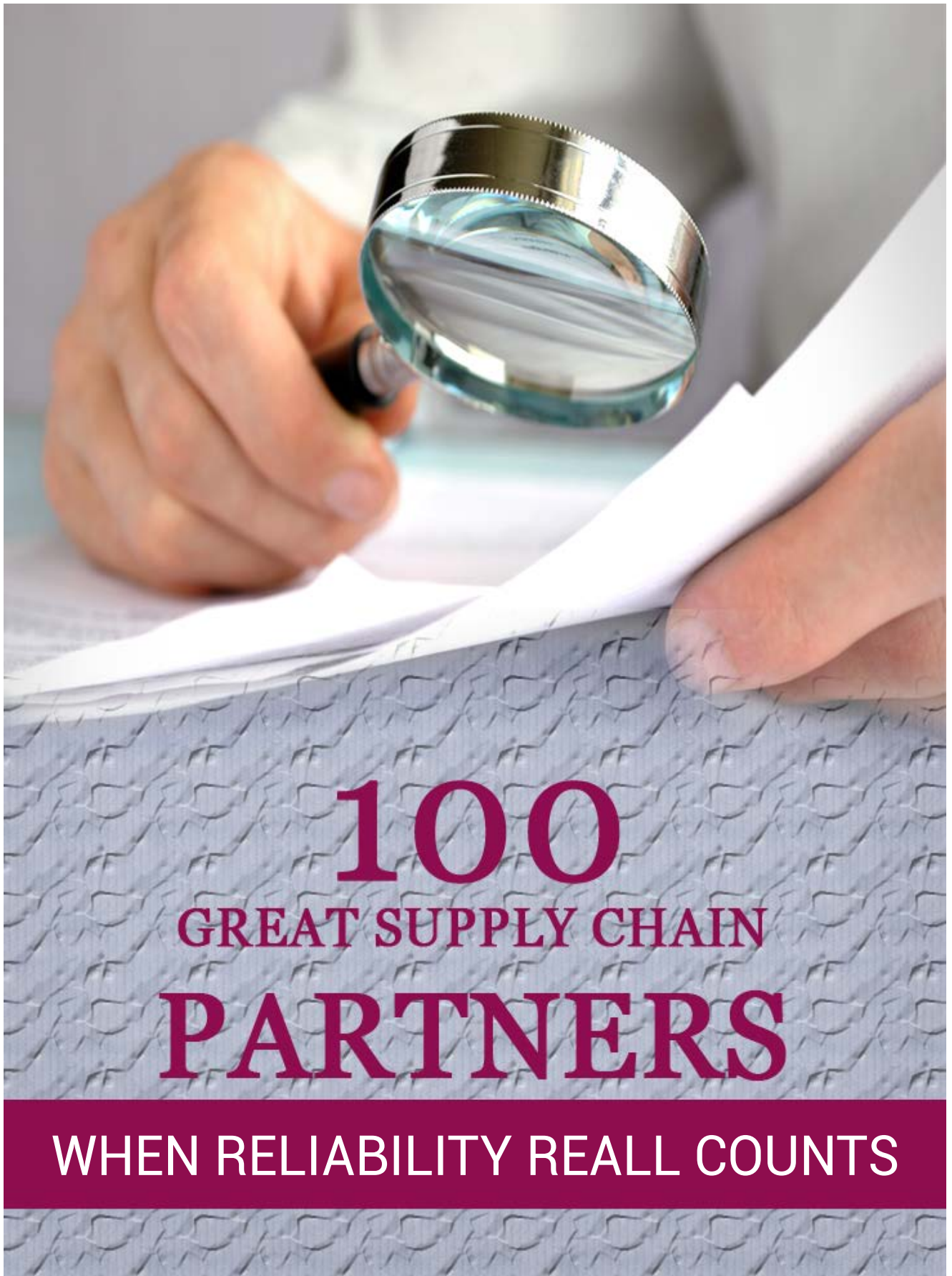




100 GREAT SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNERS

WHEN RELIABILITY REAL COUNTS



Metal Fabricator Has Moved Into Role of OEM

New owners wanted to move provider of laser cutting services into the world of original equipment manufacturing. With the help a global marketplace, Riverside Industries LLC has been able to do just that.

Riverside Industries LLC, founded in 1984, is an ISO-compliant shop that offers laser cutting, forming and fabrication services as well as AutoCad and Solid Works drafting. The company is also a full line steel, stainless steel and aluminum distributor of sheet, plate and tubing products. occupies a 38,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Huron, S.D.

The owners, Jerome and John Waldner, purchased the company in 2015 with the idea of eventually entering the original equipment manufacturer space. Their challenge lay in first needing to identify work and find custom jobs to support the shop until the company's own product line got off the ground." But where to get the custom work they required?

In the summer of 2016, Jerome, Riverside's shop foreman, and John, the company CEO, turned to MFG.com, a global marketplace that brings buyers and suppliers together, to be the source of the work they sought to sustain their shop.

Any number of directories purport to match manufacturers with suppliers of parts, but successful match-making is anything but simple. Should you only consider domestic partners or should you expand your search overseas? Should you focus only on low-cost suppliers? How can you be assured of reliability and quality work? And how

quickly can you get pricing on requested work? The Waldners felt the global marketplace offered by MFG.com sufficiently answered their concerns. After they trained with MFG.com learned the mechanics of its website and the variety of tools at their disposal, they then set up searches focusing on work involving stainless and carbon steel, since machining with sheet metal is the shop's specialty.

Within months, work identified via MFG.com constituted 50 percent of Riverside Industries' production, says Jerome Waldner. Through the marketplace, he has offered quotes on 265 RFQs and been awarded more than 60 jobs orders involving anywhere from 1 to 750 pieces. Fifty percent involved aluminum and carbon steel. Jerome indicates that he has connected with some bigger companies via MFG.com and established some excellent business relationships. Much of this work involves laser cutting, another specialty of the firm. He says that the buyers with whom he works come from all over the United States and represent a variety of industries. "We go with the flow and take whatever work comes our way."

He says the use of ShopIQ, a tool MFG.com offers to subscribers to help them benchmark their quotes against their competitors, has been beneficial to Riverside. "It has educated us on how to be competitive with other U.S. manufac-

turers." Jerome acknowledges that his bids were too high at first, but now he's got a firm grasp on his bidding strategy. He says, "We are regulated now. The practice has been good for us."

Buyer ratings also have assisted his success on MFG.com. So far, Riverside Industries has received six or seven ratings, which Jerome feels were both fair and accurate. When asked if they facilitated job wins, he says, "They help us a lot. We even got a five-star rating."

Efficiency is another boon of the partnership with MFG.com. The amount of work Riverside has received has made the company more efficient with its tooling, he says. That, in turn, saves time and money for both Riverside and its buyers.

Jerome adds that, "MFG.com has allowed us to fulfill our dream of being able to make OEM products on the side. Beyond giving us much-needed work experience, MFG.com jobs provided us the monetary resources to start making prototypes. We are now ready to market the products that we've made in house, such as our own lift table."

Riverside Industries' in-house product line includes away to recycle old thrash wheels as a pneumatic row cleaner for agriculture, an apple press, a dumpster and part box, a shop press and a vegetable press.

“Our idea of entering the OEM space is now almost a reality thanks to MFG.com,” Jerome says..“The work we won in its marketplace supported our operations as we designed our product line and perfected our prototypes. And, that work provided us the opportunityto hone our shop skills and be more efficient across the board. Now, MFG.com awards – and the ongoing business contacts we’ve made on that platform – will help support us as we market our product line. We are most grateful to MFG.com for the role it’s played in our business development.”

SPOTLIGHT

4SIGHT SUPPLY CHAIN GROUP

Their consultants have vast supply chain knowledge and act as the subject matter experts for the warehouse management system.

They provided excellent support, quality of engineering services, and a high level of professionalism.

I have never had another group or team understand my company’s processes and needs so quickly and in-depth.

They are very flexible in working with us, even during off hours work. They checked in frequently to see how things were going but not so often so as to be disruptive.



AGISTIX

They provide a single platform for global supply chain execution, visibility and event management, specifically designed to support all shipments and all modes of transportation.

Their bidding templates are easy to create and use.

They help companies with complex supply chains easily gain true visibility to every shipment across all systems, carriers, suppliers and modes.

Their excellent team does their job with great passion.



To access this article online, visit www.SupplyChainBrain.com.

Resource Links

Riverside Industries LLC, www.riversideindustriesllc.com

MFG.com, www.mfg.com

TV Home-Shopping Retailer Benefits From EDI Managed Service



As UK-based television home shopping company experienced explosive growth, it needed to consolidate all electronic data interchange operations on to one platform and integrate with its back office.

Founded in 1986, London-based JML has grown into a household name, one of the United Kingdom's favorite brands and a world leader in retail screen promotions and TV home shopping over the last two decades. With an annual turnover of £100m (\$127m) and products available in more than 70 countries, JML is a global market leader in consumer products, and one with ambitious plans for further rapid growth.

With more than 20 years' worth of experience in supplying the retail sector, JML had a myriad of EDI solutions, using both web portals and on-premise solutions to trade electronically with its customers. While this set-up enabled JML to meet its customers' EDI requirements, some of the solutions were unstable, while others were outdated versions that were unsupported, exposing the company to risk. When a new EDI requirement involved invoicing in euros, something that was not possible with the company's existing solutions, JML decided to look for a new provider.

"Our unique business model, which combines focused multichannel sales with integrated marketing, media, e-commerce and distribution, has transformed a small family-run enterprise into an international household brand," says Wayne Crick, systems de-

velopment manager at JML. "Our previous EDI set-up had evolved over many years, and due to the age of some of the solutions, it was not without its problems. We recognized that as we continued to grow we needed a more reliable and scalable solution that would enable us to consolidate all EDI on to one platform and integrate with our back office system."

Competitors Vetted

JML ultimately opted to contract with EDI provider TrueCommerce, in part because of a productive and hassle-free experience with the network through its trading relationship with a customer. JML management was impressed with the solution and service. Following some research into other providers, JML made the decision to consolidate all EDI on the TrueCommerce network.

"Moving all of our EDI requirements to TrueCommerce felt like a natural progression, due to the positive experience we'd had previously," Crick says. "They connected to all of our customers, which did not appear to be the case with some of the other providers we researched, and could handle all the necessary file formats.

"The only additional requirement we had was that we needed to be able to

integrate with both our current ERP system, Sage, and our new ERP system, Dynamics 365," says Crick.

JML is now exchanging orders, invoices, ASNs, remittances and debits with 10 of its key customers, including Asda, Argos and Boots, and TrueCommerce is in the process of on-boarding a further 10 customers.

The transition to the new platform progressed quite smoothly, Crick says. That was a welcome surprise since the expectation had been for a painful process. As it happened, TrueCommerce's implementation and onboarding team looked after the majority of the work, which made the switch easy for JML users.

Completely Reliable

The benefits have been quite pleasing to JML management as well. Outsourcing EDI has provided the retailer with a fully automated end-to-end solution for the electronic exchange of documents with its key customers that has been completely reliable.

In fact, Crick calls TrueCommerce's infrastructure and trading partner platform "first-class." Together with its managed service, he says, the solution assures JML users that system issues and errors will not affect operations.

Worries over things going wrong have dissipated, but the EDI provider's team is available to help if needed. "We receive a consistently high level of support, as opposed to logging a ticket and hoping for the best as was the case previously," says Caroline Youssefi, systems functional consultant at JML.

TrueCommerce's managed service team monitors the platform to ensure that message validation errors do not affect JML and its customers. As a consequence, the company no longer receives penalties for the late processing of orders, which has led to improved customer relations.

"We also benefit from quicker payments," says Youssefi. "Previously, there were delays if there were any issues with our invoices, such as incorrect information or even at a basic level the format of the files. The solution now validates that invoices are correct before they are sent to our customers, which has resulted in fewer invoice queries and quicker payments."

She says there has been a corresponding boost in efficiency and productivity since the staff does not have to spend time resolving issues; rather, it can instead focus on their core roles.

The simplicity of the solution's user interface has made EDI processing much quicker and easier for the team, Crick says. In the past, it might take as much as an hour to send a batch of invoices. That task is now completed in a matter of minutes.

JML is on a growth spurt, and highly likely to receive additional EDI requests as new business rolls in. Fortunately for JML users, the solution is fully scalable. New trading partners can be added on to the network quickly and easily. The relationship calls for the TrueCommerce team to manage the onboarding process, ensuring all customer deadlines are met, without distracting JML's IT department from other projects.

Crick says his company is keen to maximize the use of EDI to further streamline its supply chain, increase efficiency and remove paper-based processes entirely. There are plans to reach out to customers who have not requested that they trade electronically to see if they are EDI enabled.

To access this article online, visit
www.SupplyChainBrain.com.

Resource Links

JML, www.jmldirect.com

TrueCommerce, www.truecommerce.com

SPOTLIGHT

AVERCAST

Every time we thought of a new way to look at things, they either already had a solution for it or they were willing to work on adding it.

They helped us streamline our forecasting process and improve our forecast accuracy.

They are available practically 24/7 to support us.

Avercast has saved our company tens of thousands of dollars by managing our inventory on a daily basis.



AVNET

They are willing to address complex supply chain demands in rapid fashion.

This provider exceeds our expectations for on-time deliveries, customer service, and overall supply chain management.





Manufacturer Finds Acquisition Brings Unlimited ERP Seats

Taking over companies can bring IT expense as well as new business opportunities. So an electrical supply manufacturer was delighted that a merger brought unlimited licenses at no extra cost.

As companies expand and acquire new business, it's crucial that they work to create a cohesive company culture among all branches by installing uniform business processes to ensure a seamless transition. Partnering with an IT solutions provider that not only unifies locations but also enables companies to grow and expand the use of their software platform without added costs is crucial for a financially sound acquisition process.

Kauffman Engineering, an electrical supply manufacturer based in Lebanon, Ind., has rapidly expanded its business through a number of acquisitions. In doing so, the company quickly found itself in need of a new business tool that would enable it to unify its manufacturing and inventory processes without being penalized for adding seats to the platform. For Kauffman, the solution came with the purchase of one of its new companies already running the enterprise resource planning software platform from VAI.

The privately held company supplies electrical wire harnesses, lead wires, jumper wires, twisted pair wires, cable assemblies, molded plugs and thermoform plastics.

In addition to its wire harness/cable assembly manufacturing capabilities, Kauffman also manufactures automated through-hole, BGA, and surface as-

sembly populated circuit boards. As an added service to its customers, it offers manufacturing of instrument panels in thermoform decorative and critical surface finishes built to exact customer specifications.

Since its inception in 1973, Kauffman has grown from a single-site wiring harness operation into a multi-location company.

Kauffman serves a diverse group of industries, including lawn and garden, transportation, material handling, industrial controls, medical equipment, off-highway vehicles, HVAC, agriculture, marine, aerospace, and many others, according to Scott Hite, company chief financial officer.

While its acquisitions have enhanced market growth, they are not without certain growing pains. With three newly acquired companies, Kauffman Engineering was up against the clock to implement an ERP solution that would not only unify processes across all locations but also keep the company up to date with the latest supply chain technologies, allowing Kauffman to cost-effectively add employees onto the platform well into the foreseeable future. Many mergers are stymied by the need to add hundreds of additional user licenses, which can immediately erode chances for ROI, Hite says. Kauffman's growth potential hinges on the ability to avoid

that unnecessary added cost.

The answer to Kauffman's challenge nearly fell into its lap: one of the companies that Kauffman acquired, M&G Electronics, had been efficiently operating with VAI's S2K Enterprise Management software since 2003. When the Kauffman team acquired M&G in 2015 it immediately recognized both the performance benefits of the solution and, just as importantly, the option for unlimited user licenses. That scalability would enable Kauffman to expand its team across a single, powerful platform without additional IT spend.

Many mid-sized companies, such as M&G Electronics, experience difficulty being able to bring on the technology skills to allow them to compete with larger competitors. Mid-market companies need solutions that can provide end-to-end capabilities rather than having to buy and implement all the hardware and applications themselves. The same is true for larger enterprises, such as Kauffman Engineering.

VAI's cloud-based S2K Enterprise solution is designed to give mid-sized growth companies the advanced technology they need to improve efficiencies, reduce costs, and grow, in an easy-to-deploy and support environment.

The ERP solution comes with built-in analytics and intelligence, which pro-

vide companies with the ability to make smarter decisions that better address their real-time business imperatives.

Since a series of successful acquisitions, Kauffman has continued to onboard its employees to VAI's platform. As the company continues to grow its business, VAI's unlimited user license will grow with it, allowing the manufacturer to continuously add new users to the platform with no additional fees.

"VAI's unlimited user license has played an intricate role in the success of our recent acquisitions," Hite says. "The unlimited user license has enabled us to onboard as many employees as needed to ensure a successful transition without cost-prohibitive fees."

Hite says that Kauffman has only just begun its expansion process, and company executives see no end in sight for market growth— and no end to its partnership with VAI. "Beyond the unlimited user license, the customer service that accompanies the software makes choosing VAI a no-brainer. We feel confident in the partnership that we have developed with VAI, and we trust they will continue to support us as our business grows, well into the foreseeable future."

Moreover, by integrating VAI's manufacturing requirement planning solution, Kauffman has been able to digitize its day-to-day activities, cutting out the labor and human error associated with manual document management. Hite says that makes the company more environmentally friendly, efficient and profitable.

To access this article online, visit www.SupplyChainBrain.com.

Resource Links

Kauffman Engineering, www.kewire.com
VAI, www.vai.net

SPOTLIGHT

BAXTER PLANNING SYSTEMS

A solid partner for a decade, they have continued to evolve to meet our planning needs.

They truly are a joy to work with and we believe that we will reach all of our demand planning goals thanks to their system.

They have been an invaluable resource for planning our global support network.

We have a very complex system, and they do a great job of helping us plan according to our real requirements.



C3 SOLUTIONS

Their solution can be implemented in a standard way and can cover all our business flows without customized modifications.

They have made a huge positive impact on our inbound operations across all of our regional distribution centers.

The implementation process was an enjoyable and successful experience from our perspective.

They provided a seamless implementation of a multi-warehouse dock scheduling system with more than 2000 users in two different countries.

