

Primus Power Breaks New Ground

In late spring of 2014, Hayward, California-based Primus Power was more than ready to implement its first-ever ERP system. Their QuickBooks and Excel apps had taken the then five-year-old company this far, but now that they were beginning to actually deliver real products—innovative energy storage solutions to enable renewable power worldwide—they needed a real ERP system. And they needed it fast.

In fact, fast implementation was one of the key ERP system selection drivers for Primus, along with the low TCO gained from a cloud-based system, an engineering focus, strong supply chain collaboration capabilities, and simple-to-use, accessible-from-anywhere functionality. Their search for the right ERP system quickly led them—via multiple paths—to Kenandy.

All Roads Lead to the Kenandy ERP Cloud

“We heard about Kenandy from multiple sources,” explains Mark Collins, Senior Director of Operations for Primus Power, “which helped to reinforce our decision.” Performing initial research about which ERP system would best align with the Salesforce Platform, Collins found that “Kenandy kept popping up.” Weeks later, after explaining the company’s evolving ERP needs to a third-party implementer, Collins was surprised when the suggestion was to check out Kenandy, “because the guy wouldn’t make any money if we went that route. But he knew that was the best path for us. And he was right.”

Seamless Integration, Real-Time Visibility

Delivering clean-tech energy storage solutions based on advanced battery technology, Primus Power was already successfully using cloud-based Arena Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) for their groundbreaking design and engineering activities. It was essential that the new ERP and existing PLM system integrate seamlessly. Kenandy fit the bill (of materials) perfectly.

“Kenandy not only integrates seamlessly with our PLM system,” says Collins, “its integration with the Salesforce Platform gives us additional flexibility that lets us rapidly configure functionality for our specific business needs. That was a powerful differentiator for us.”

In Primus’ fast-moving, design-focused environment, an engineer can now implement a product idea or improvement in the PLM system and within minutes the new part number is generated in Kenandy—automatically. Instantly, people throughout the company can find that part; there’s a pricing history for it, a supply history. “People no longer say, ‘Did we order that bracket?’ They can now actually see that it’s on order. They can find the purchase order and the promised delivery date,” says Collins. “So much information is now available at people’s fingertips simply because we created a part number that’s now searchable in the system.”

“We couldn’t have gotten to where we are without Kenandy. Its speed and flexibility have been major enablers for us.”



Mark Collins,
Senior Director of Operations,
Primus Power

Workflows that used to be difficult to track on Excel can now be efficiently executed by engineers, with files and documents automatically shared across the company. Production meetings have been transformed from winging things at the whiteboard (messy and unproductive!) to drilling down on relevant reports together. Not only is everyone instantly on the same page, meetings are far more meaningful—and a whole lot shorter.

“The advantage of being live, in real-time, is that I’ll look at something at 7:30 a.m. and be ready to beat up the materials guy about it at the 9:00 a.m. meeting,” jokes Collins. “He’ll then say, ‘Oh, we just got that in,’ and pull it up in Kenandy. Instantly, we’re all looking at the same data—no lag time.”

User-Driven Functionality

Primus also appreciates how fast and easy it is for users to tweak Kenandy to meet their specific needs—no coding required. For example, they designed their own shortage report to show the information they wanted—including room for notes and links to the purchase order—which is instantly available to all who need it. “So now the buyer doesn’t have to keep repeating the same information and sending endless emails,” explains Collins. “We’ve been able to quickly gain this kind of efficiency because Kenandy is user-driven rather than developer-driven.”

And because Kenandy lets people self-serve data, “I no longer have to phone the buyer asking, ‘Did you place your order yet?’ or bug the warehouse guy, ‘Has that delivery come in?’ Now all of us can see what’s happening in real time, and track whatever information we need.”

Social and Mobile Benefits

Primus is also benefiting from Kenandy’s social and mobile capabilities. They use Salesforce Chatter, which is integrated with Kenandy, to help clarify communication on specific documents, such as purchase orders or invoices. They’re also taking advantage of Kenandy on mobile phones and tablets to check the availability, location, and delivery schedule of parts—via encoded barcodes on bins and boxes—on the manufacturing floor or at the warehouse, making workflows more efficient companywide.

The Need for Speed

“By the time we realized we needed an ERP system, it was already too late,” says Collins, “so the speed of implementation was critical.” The entire process—from signing on with Kenandy to going live—took less than three months.

Getting users up and running was also fast and easy. “Kenandy is really intuitive,” says Collins. “It’s easy to navigate and use. The demos were so clear that we didn’t need to spend a lot of time on training.”

The need for usability was so important for the company’s ongoing success that Collins says, “We would have gladly given up depth of functionality for usability if we’d had to. Fortunately, with Kenandy, we didn’t have to give up anything.”

Collins also appreciates the fact that Kenandy and Primus will grow up together. “We’re both breaking new ground, with cloud ERP and renewable energy. That’s pretty exciting.”