

Case Study

mj flood
Office Interiors

Company Snapshot

Number of iplicit users

20

Previous System

Great Plains

Go Live

January 2020

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mj flood

MJ Flood modernises workflow with upgrade to cloud-accounting solution

Tara Moran, Finance Manager, discusses how cloud-based Job Costing functionality has transformed business efficiency at MJ Flood.

Tell me about MJ Flood?

MJ Flood specialises in the supply of copiers, digital technology, office furniture and interiors to businesses throughout Ireland. Our Interiors and Interior Contracting divisions are the first companies within the group to move to **iplicit**.

What are the day-to-day demands that are typically placed upon your finance system?

From the sales rep point of view, we need projects set up very frequently. On each project there will be a considerable amount of activity regarding procurement. The Admin staff are busy using the system day-to-day regarding numerous queries that arise around various items on any job. Then at the end of the month, I review the project status and close projects accordingly. The management accounts are prepared based around projects closed within the month.

We need a system to keep a close eye on invoice authorisations while providing up-to-the minute reporting on our cash positions and be able predict accurate forecasts, regarding future cash requirements per project, to ensure nothing is delayed unnecessarily.

What led to your decision to change systems?

We were struggling with the restrictions of Great Plains around job/project costing because in order for us to use the solution it offered, we had to use their stock solution. As we don't operate on a stock basis as we order to demand this wasn't an efficient option for us. We had to maintain a large amount of Excel spreadsheets to work around the requirements of the system.

A fundamental issue, in the way we operate, is that we have hundreds of thousands of items that we can supply as part of a project. For instance, a single office chair can have a multitude of finishes; as a result, the permutations across any single contract are so vast that it would require a complex stock system in place for what is actually a simple transaction. Therefore, we are very much a project-based business where we order everything to demand and we needed a system that could provide job-costing on a project-by-project basis.

iplicit

Under the old system I had to cost all the jobs manually and we had an extremely paper-based workflow; large paper files for every project that I'd frequently have to go through. For large multi-million projects this was extremely time consuming and tedious. I had to cost all projects on Excel and then reconciling that back to the transactions processed through Great Plains. Maintaining an accurate Work in Progress figure was immensely challenging and time consuming. As our PO system was Excel based, we were faced with huge challenges getting an accurate GRNI figure at year end.

What was your key criteria for a new system and why did you choose iplicit over the other systems being considered?

Project-based job costing without requiring a stock system was paramount. In addition, having a cloud-based system was a key consideration. Interestingly though, when we set out to evaluate our options, having decided to upgrade our accounting software, being a true-cloud solution wasn't on our list of key criteria. However, the more we learned about the benefits, and the more we saw the power of what we could achieve, we soon added it as a 'must have' when reviewing possible solutions.

Being able to integrate **iplicit** with Trax, our company-wide document management system was also a compelling factor when considering our options.

We'd had several calls with possible vendors; Sage, Netsuite, SAP Business One and a couple of others and one of the reasons that we chose **iplicit** was because of its flexibility to be configured around our business and the way we needed it to work. Other systems we reviewed seemed very rigid in comparison; we were often told 'it can't do this or it can do that' - a sort of 'like it or lump it' approach, whereas the **iplicit** team was much more focused on what we needed to achieve as a Finance Team.

Since going live with the system, how has your general experience been with both the software and iplicit staff?

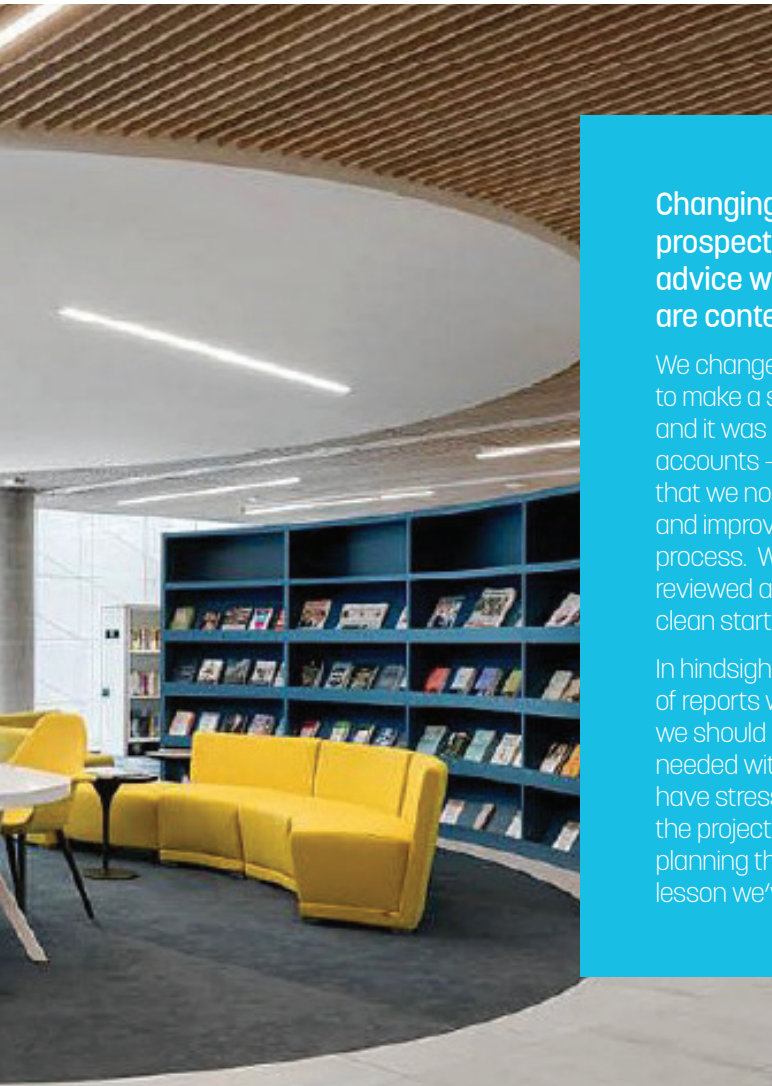
Really good! I've been really happy with the staff at **iplicit**. We had a quick turnaround between choosing **iplicit** and going live as we wanted to go live at the beginning of our financial year; as such we didn't get to spend as much time planning as we should have. As a result, we made several changes during implementation but everyone in **iplicit** has been very obliging to make sure that we get the system that we need. Brian, Tommy and Pat have been our main contacts and they've been a pleasure to deal with.

As for the product itself, I just love it! Everything is so easy and so accessible, and it has a very modern user interface. With our old system, to get information out of it wasn't just a click of a button; we'd have to go in and run different reports and do VLOOKUPS from one report to another to get everything together in the format we required. Whereas with **iplicit**, I can just click a button and it goes into Excel, stick it into a pivot and I have what I want; it's so much easier to use.



From a functionality perspective, what are the major differences with your new system compared to the old one?

Well, I'm sure you've guessed that job-costing and not needing stock are high on the top of my list! Aside from that though, I think the navigation and user-experience is a massive contrast compared to what we've been used to. With **iplicit**, once you have a basic level of understanding of how the system works, it's pretty much intuitive, no matter where you are. I've found that even when I'm not sure of something, I can take a guess and it's typically right. Also, if I did make a mistake, it's easy to reverse it, it was often a complicated process in our previous system to get back to where we were. As a result, I think it means all our users aren't as fearful of making a mistake in **iplicit** as we were with the old system, because there isn't a major headache to follow.



Changing Finance systems can be quite a daunting prospect; having been through the process, what advice would you give other Heads of Finance who are contemplating upgrading their system?

We changed at the year-end which I think is a really good time to make a switch, if it's possible. It gave us a really clean cut-off and it was also a good opportunity to do a clean up on the accounts - we were able to remove suppliers and customers that we no longer deal with, we tidied up the nominal ledger and improved our account structure as part of the migration process. We also ensured our closing balances had been reviewed and cleared up before the migration, so we had a very clean starting point on the new system.

In hindsight, I wish we'd given more consideration to the types of reports we wanted. I think we were winging it a little whereas we should have spent more time discussing what we actually needed with the end users - had we done this I think we'd have stressed out your guys a little less towards the end of the project! In the end, we got exactly what we wanted, but planning the final reporting requirements earlier would be a lesson we've learned.

Do you have a favourite feature within iplicit?

It has to be job costing again! It has made my life so much easier; I can now turn the accounts around in two to three days, compared with at least a week with the old way of working. And, even at that, with the old system, there was no guarantee that my WIP balances would be accurate, whereas now it's very easy to produce a detailed listing of my WIP balance, review it with the company Directors and make accurately informed decisions when required.

Has your team been impacted by remote working?

Yes, we've had our fair share of home working like everyone else and using iplicit during 'Lockdown' has been just brilliant. In total, I think we were out of the office for around 3 months; we could all just log-in as if we were in the office. In contrast, I also handle accounts for a couple of other companies within our group, that are still based on the old system, and dialling into a server was very painful, to say the least!

I think it would be very difficult for the sales reps and admin teams to perform as well as they have, while working remotely, if we were still as paper-based as we were before. However, with **iplicit**, the 'reps' place their orders remotely and the admin team has immediate visibility of them. We can all see the open PO's and what's in draft and what's progressing.



I think the last thing I'd like to say is just how impressed I am with the iplicit staff and the way they just 'got it', not just the technology of how to do things, but also the accounting context of what we needed done and why. That was brilliant. "



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Tara Moran
Finance Manager
at MJ Flood

Anything else you'd like to say?

It's been a really good experience all round. Before committing to **iplicit**, we first visited an existing customer site and spent some time chatting with them. I'd thoroughly recommend this if at all possible. **iplicit** product demos are good but there really is no substitute for being on site with a customer using the system and being able to discuss their experience of upgrading, and seeing how it works first-hand.

I think the last thing I'd like to say is just how impressed I am with the **iplicit** staff and the way they just 'got it', not just the technology of how to do things, but also the accounting context of what we needed done and why. That was brilliant. I was previously involved in an upgrade project and while the IT resources that facilitated this were very good, and they did what we asked, they didn't totally understand why we were doing it. Whereas with the **iplicit** team, they understood why we wanted to say, do certain reconciliations and at times we were pointed in a better direction as they offered suggestions to enable us to achieve a more efficient outcome, because they understood finance side of it too.

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