

Six kitchen manufacturers reveal how Empower Software has improved their productivity



By Sean O'Sullivan, B Com (Hons) Otago University



TOTAL KITCHEN SOLUTIONS – MOUNT GAMBIER, SA
“Using PCs on the factory floor and Empower we get an estimated 28% more kitchens per month from our factory staff.” Richard Hein, Managing Director, 08 8725 8755.

Key Points

- We are achieving the same output with two less factory staff. This is a \$80,000 per year wage cost saving.
- Right from day one of using Empower it exposed all our weaknesses in terms of time overruns on jobs, insufficient time allowed for in our quotations, daily downtime, rework, not meeting completion dates, excessive overtime etc.
- Using Empower we now have a tool to accurately record and report individual and full team staff output per job, daily, weekly or monthly, which allows us to pay bonus to each of our staff.
- Empower has been a major step up for us from time sheets that our staff filled in at the end of the day because, as everyone knows, manual time sheets are hugely inaccurate and therefore don't work. I would never go back to manual time sheets, not in a million years.
- Empower has radically changed and improved practically our entire business.

TOTAL KITCHEN SOLUTIONS – MOUNT GAMBIER, SA	
Core products manufactured (or core business)	Kitchens and cabinets
Percentage of jobs custom one-offs	100%
Number of factory floor staff	7
Number of total staff	10
Annual revenue (approx)	private
Factory and office size m2	690
Number of CNCs	1 flatbed
Geographical area serviced	Mount Gambier, SA mainly
Staff times on jobs recording prior to Empower	Factory staff manually recorded their times on jobs daily
Years in business	30
Association membership and any positions held	Housing Industry Association
Staff groups tracked on Empower	Factory
Years using Empower	5
Number of PC's on the factory floor with Empower on	2 PCs
Number of our managers using Empower	3





PJT CABINETS – TULLAMARINE, MELBOURNE

“Using Empower we get 20 to 25% more kitchens out the door each week, with the same factory staff.” Peter Tressider, Managing Director, 03 9335 4533

Key Points

- Our factory and office productivity gains have been significant and have made a big improvement to our quarterly profitability.
- Our office and factory staff know their budgeted times and work towards achieving their goal on each job.
- Empower is very good at reporting all our forms of our factory downtime.
- If I was starting business in any form of manufacturing this is the first piece of software I would buy.



PJT CABINETS – TULLAMARINE, MELBOURNE	
Core products manufactured (or core business)	Kitchens and cabinets
Percentage of jobs custom one-offs	100%
Number of factory floor staff	8
Number of total staff	12
Annual revenue (approx)	\$1.4 million
Factory and office size m2	800 m2
Number of CNCs	1 Multicam
Geographical area serviced	Melbourne
Staff times on jobs recording prior to Empower	Factory staff manually recorded their times on jobs at day end, which was woefully inaccurate and pointless recording
Years in business	27
Association membership and any positions held	Cabinet Makers and Designers Association (CMDA)
Staff groups tracked on Empower	Machine programmers and our factory staff
Years using Empower	27
Number of PC's on the factory floor with Empower on	2 PCs
Number of our managers using Empower	3



TASKER JOINERY – SYDNEY, NSW

“Using Empower, we are getting 20% more joinery out the door each month.” Greg and Dean Tasker, 02 9540 4100

Key Points

- For the first time in many years I enjoy coming to work because the Empower system has my entire business monitored and well in control. I am no longer stressed as I used to be due to inadequate monitoring. I now feel as if my management, office staff, factory staff and site staff are now “in the same boat and rowing in the same direction”.
- After three months of using Empower our factory productivity had increased by an estimated 15% and our annual profitability by approximately 45%.
- After two years of using Empower our factory productivity has increased by an estimated 20%.
- When I finally retire I will be able to pass on to my son a business with far better systems and controls and a business that is far more productive and profitable.

TASKER JOINERY – SYDNEY, NSW	
Core products manufactured (or core business)	Interior fit outs, commercial joinery and kitchens
Percentage of jobs custom one-offs	100%
Number of factory floor staff	8
Number of total staff	13
Annual revenue (approx)	\$2.3 million approx
Factory and office size m2	400 m2 approx
Number of CNCs	1
Geographical area serviced	Sydney mainly
Staff times on jobs recording prior to Empower	Factory staff manually recorded their times on jobs daily
Years in business	31
Association membership and any positions held	Housing Industry Association
Staff groups tracked on Empower	Office, factory and site staff
Years using Empower	2
Number of PC's on the factory floor with Empower on	2 PCs
Number of our managers using Empower	3





JAG KITCHENS - AUCKLAND

“Using PCs on the factory floor and Empower Software we get 30% more kitchens out the door each week.” Nick McLagan, Production Manager, Jag Kitchens +64 9 577 4573 or +64 21 725 137 (m)

Key Points

- Our factory staff manage their own time using Empower and bring their jobs in on budgeted times.
- PCs on the factory floor and Empower is the only possible means of tracking and recording accurate and live times on jobs and therefore ensures our factory staff are 100% accountable on all their jobs.
- Empower gives us a massive labour cost advantage in the market place. We would not operate our business without this cost saving and cost advantage.

JAG KITCHENS - AUCKLAND

Core products manufactured (or core business)	Kitchens and cabinets
Percentage of jobs custom one-offs	100%
Number of factory floor staff	4
Number of total staff	10
Annual revenue (approx)	\$4 million
Factory and office size m2	300 m2
Number of CNCs	1 Tekcel
Geographical area serviced	Auckland mainly
Staff times on jobs recording prior to Empower	No time recording on jobs previously
Years in business	9
Association membership and any positions held	NKBA and Mastercraft Kitchen Group
Staff groups tracked on Empower	Factory staff. We need to progress to getting our office staff and our installers onto Empower
Years using Empower	3
Number of PC's on the factory floor with Empower on	1 PC
Number of our managers using Empower	3

MONTAGE KITCHENS - HAMILTON

“I am confident that if we turned off Empower we would go back to taking 20% longer to manufacture our kitchens.”

Ken Monk, Managing Director, Craig Mackie, Production Manager +64 7 847 9174

MONTAGE KITCHENS - HAMILTON

Core products manufactured (or core business)	Kitchens, cabinets, timber windows and doors
Percentage of jobs custom one-offs	100%
Number of factory floor staff	11
Number of total staff	17
Annual revenue (approx)	\$3 million
Factory and office size m2	1500 m2
Number of CNCs	1 @ 6.1 metre by 1.8 metre twin double ended
Geographical area serviced	Waikato, NZ mainly
Staff times on jobs recording prior to Empower	Factory staff manually recorded their times on jobs daily
Years in business	33
Association membership and any positions held	NZ Master Joiners. President Master Joiners 2004
Staff groups tracked on Empower	Machine programmers, factory staff and delivery staff
Years using Empower	10
Number of PC's on the factory floor with Empower on	2 PCs plus we have Empower on our CNC and our edgebander
Number of our managers using Empower	3



Key Points

- In the first year of using Empower we maintained output and achieved wage cost savings of \$150,000 per year.
- Our factory staff are 100% aware of their budgeted times and actual times on each of their jobs and, accordingly, 100% accountable on each of their jobs.



• Montage Kitchens have been involved in the development of Empower over the last 10 years. The software has been developed largely by kitchen makers for kitchen makers – that's why it works so well for our industry.

**GREENMOUNT
MANUFACTURING -
AUCKLAND**

“Empower has been a very good investment for us over the last three years. I should have purchased it eight years ago when I first looked at it.”

**Graham Russell and Management Team,
+64 9 273 9030 or
+64 21 616 690 (m).**



Key Points

- When we introduced Empower it instantly made our manual time sheets redundant along with all of the manual entry of hours back to specific jobs, which in itself was a huge time and cost saving. Empower also reports our staff times worked for wages.
- It's made our production managers and estimators jobs much easier.
- On day one the system was simple and easy for all of our factory staff to use and implementation was very straightforward.
- It gives our factory staff accurate, live time budgeted times for each job, which helps them focus on meeting or exceeding their targets.
- The 'Who's Working on What' screen gives all our management a live screenshot of the jobs that are being worked on, staff on jobs, and their budget times as well as the time remaining on each active job.
- Our productivity has increased significantly since using Empower simply because budgeted times on jobs are so much more visible to factory staff doing jobs, and also management overseeing jobs live.

GREENMOUNT MANUFACTURING - AUCKLAND

Core products manufactured (or core business)	Wide range of products. Shop fitting, commercial fit outs, kitchens, vanities, campervan cabinetry and contract machining
Percentage of jobs custom one-offs	100%
Number of factory floor staff	35. We employ additional casuals when workload and larger projects require
Number of total staff	54
Annual revenue (approx)	\$10m
Factory and office size m2	6350 square metres
Number of CNCs	8 in total, wide range of specialist applications, including large 5 axis
Geographical area serviced	New Zealand wide and export for Australian projects / clients
Staff times on jobs recording prior to Empower	Manual time cards
Years in business	27
Association membership and any positions held	National Kitchen and Bathroom Association
Staff groups tracked on Empower	Office, factory, delivery and site staff
Years using Empower	3
Number of PC's on the factory floor with Empower on	8 PCs plus we have 2 Empower systems on the monitors of our CNC machines
Number of our managers using Empower	6

Phone, e mail or go to our web site - and we will send you a FREE information package including a proposal to implement Empower Software in your business.
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