

Using Crows Nest Keeps Irish Woodworking Firm Focused on Growth

Byrne Custom Joinery is far better organized and more cost aware since integrating ERP system throughout its operations.

Byrne Custom Joinery (BCJ) of Ballyadams, Laois, Ireland, is in expansion mode. The third-generation woodworking company just completed an 11,500-square-foot addition to make room for its third Biesse CNC router, among other additional machinery installations and upgrades. The new Biesse Rover A is a 5-axis nesting machine with automated loading and unloading.

The added production capacity is well warranted. The family-owned company, led by CEO PJ Byrne, has experienced a 35% increase in sales over the last three years primarily serving high-end commercial and residential clients. Byrne is ably assisted by his sons, Thomas, general manager, and Carl, production manager.

Overseeing the capital improvement project, while also keeping production schedules on track, required the Byrne's trio to juggle more balls than usual. Fortunately, the company was in a better place to take on the expansion project's demands having previously implemented Crows Nest Software.

Speaking on behalf of his father and brother, Carl Byrne, grandson of company founder Kevin Byrne, says Crows Nest's all-in-one CRM and ERP software has helped the 25-man company organize all of its core activities from project scheduling and communications through materials management and project financials.

Byrne says BCJ first became aware of Crows Nest about five years ago. "We were pretty impressed with the demonstration of the software, but we decided to hold off for a little while due to the uncertainty of the global recession. We signed up for Crows Nest in 2019.

"Implementing Crows Nest has revolutionized how we do things here because it organizes everything we do," Byrne continues, "The software is like a home for all of our projects. Each job has an individual file that contains corresponding branch folders for things like estimates, drawings, schedules and customer communications. When we add a new project, Crows Nest automatically generates a list of folders for the job and it's the same list and format of folders for every job. This eliminates the problem of an individual setting up folders for themselves and then things start getting all over the place. This is a big benefit because our people know where to put stuff and everyone knows exactly where to find it."

Accurate Accounting of Labor Hours

One of Byrne's personal favorite features of Crows Nest is its ability to automatically collect the time each shop employee spends on a particular task for a project.

"We used to use timesheets that each employee on the shop floor filled out by hand," he says. "The problem was that they would fill out the timesheets at the end of their shift by memory, so they would

not be accurate. Now, each employee has the Crows Nest time clock app on their phone. This allows them to select from the list of current projects and quickly clock into the phase of a job they are working on. We get a perfect recording of their hours automatically captured in Crows Nest so we know right away if we've made money or didn't make money producing that item.

"For example, if we've done 10 jobs involving a similar style wall paneling, I can go back to see if each of those jobs required about the same number of hours per square meter to produce." Byrne says, that amassing a track record of the time it takes to process a certain type of part or assemble a particular product helps point out the potential need to make process improvements or to adjust labor prices so that BCJ can generate more accurate estimates when bidding on future projects.

Having Crows Nest integrated across BCJ's operations yields additional benefits as well, Byrne says. For one, use of the software's time clock app saves time in the front office. "We no longer need someone to keystroke each timesheet into a spread sheet. That frees a person's time to do more productive things." For another, Byrne says he can generate a report within seconds to see which shop employees have scheduled time off. "This is especially good to know if we have a really big job to get out. We can adjust our schedules as necessary."

'A Cultural Thing'

"Getting everybody on board to use Crows Nest to work with 100 percent efficiency really is a cultural thing," Byrne says. "Crows Nest is still relatively new for us. We're still learning. It's so extensive of a software that you have to start off small.

"But I have no doubts that Crows Nest has improved our organization and efficiency, and removed much human error. It's been a big help for keeping us focused on growing our business."