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Viatek

E-automate points the way to the future for Australian print service provider

While the office equipment industry in Australia has changed and will continue to do so over the coming years, leading print service provider Viatek is continuously challenged to look for ways to implement technology to streamline systems and processes.

Viatek began life in 1984 as a dealer in regional Victoria

Over the past 35 years, it has expanded in the state and in New South Wales to become Fuji Xerox's largest dealer in Australia and one of the top five OE dealers in the ANZ region. More than 200 staff in 16 offices now service over 12,000 customers across a variety of sectors including government, education, and small business.

Regional General Manager Damian McDonald notes, as the tail end of Generation X and now millennials become more prevalent in the management of business, there is an increasing demand for dynamic and available access to the products and services the company provides.

"Commoditisation of our overall market has slowly eroded our profitability. So, there is an increased need to have reliable access to data points that assist in the better utilisation of resources and management of key business facets that can drive greater profit," says Damian.

Incumbent applications limit the customer experience

Viatek's original project scope was to look for better ways to engage its customers via an online portal. It had identified some critical issues of incumbent applications. These included:

- No means for customers to interact with the application directly, thus requiring a Viatek staff member to facilitate transactions
- Limited data accessibility for internal business intelligence reporting
- Lack of a consolidated view of company data such as inventory, financials, customers, equipment, and service calls
- Difficulty in accessing information required at a functional level including sales, administration, and service

OVERVIEW
Viatek
viatek.com.au
Melbourne, VIC, Australia

BUSINESS CHALLENGES:

- The company needed better ways to engage its customers via an online portal with 24/7 access and broad capabilities.

BENEFITS OF SWITCHING:

- With e-automate, management has a global view of the entire business including, inventory, service calls, pre-loved machines, service technicians, and assets.

- E-automate has improved customer experience, integration with other applications, data transparency, and reporting capabilities.

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> **Through e-automate, we will continue to evolve our business to provide an edge in today's competitive market."**

- Inability to offer a 24/7 portal to customers to view and pay accounts, monitor usage, book a service call, or order consumables
- No automated visibility, management, and transfer of stock between the branches

The project team conducts an extensive search for the right ERP solution

Looking for solutions to these pain points, a Viatek project team evaluated several ERP alternatives from local and overseas providers to find the best fit for its business. The goal was to find a solution not only for the present but also a platform that could scale and provide increased capabilities in the future. They narrowed their selection down to two and then undertook an extensive evaluation process before making the final selection. The advantages of e-automate over the functions provided by the previous system included, but were not limited to:

- An authenticated, secure, and 'intelligent' interaction with customers
- A customer portal with the ability to log consumable orders, service calls, recall and/or pay an invoice, and leverage QR code technology to accurately identify the device's position
- Automation of common tasks, including the processing of credit card payments
- Seamless and dynamic integration with current platforms, e.g., FMAudit, Salesforce
- Simplified reporting across the print group at an aggregate or individual level
- A global view of the entire business including inventory, service calls, pre-loved machines, service technicians, and assets
- The capability to act as a single business as opposed to six independent business operations
- More tactical management of stock holding across the group
- The ability to quickly mine group or local data directly, within a business intelligence tool, or dynamically in Excel® spreadsheets
- Leveraging the knowledge of the broader worldwide e-automate community to improve efficiencies and offerings to customers

Migrating 20 years' worth of data would be a challenge

Damian also saw data migration from their prior ERP system as an opportunity to clean up old data first and was impressed with how ECI facilitated the operation.

"At first, a project of this size looked like it would take two years, but the ECI team broke the task down into manageable chunks, and the e-automate import spreadsheets made this process less manual," he explains.

"

The Salesforce connector is providing the sales team with a view of the customers' environment with rich data such as volumes, service calls, and device history."

Training, guidance, support, and go-live processes exceed staff expectations

Not having the ability to access the e-automate training centres in the USA, Viatek invested in having one of ECI's trainers come to Australia for two weeks to work with its administrative staff. "It helped that the trainer was our implementation coordinator, so she had a good understanding of our requirements," Damian adds. "She was also on-site for our go-live to ensure the process went smoothly and provided on-the-job training and guidance."

Viatek went into the project with its eyes open, knowing that support would be dependent on the work hours overlapping between the USA and Australia at certain times of the day. When needing support, the response has always been prompt, and Viatek is looking forward to working with local staff as ECI builds its team in Australia.

With e-automate, Viatek now has a single view across all its branches in one system

Viatek has a consolidated view of stock across the business and has eliminated inter-branch billing of equipment and parts. Damian also lists several other benefits:

When we go live with the customer portal, our customers will have the ability to engage with us 24/7. The automatic syncing between e-automate and FMAudit has reduced billing time. Access

to reports through e-views has provided up-to-date information in a simple format that can be customised as required."

Changing ERP systems is a daunting task for any business

In Damian's view, a way to approach it is to go back and understand how customers want to interact with your company and then work out how to achieve that. "E-automate is a platform that is continuing to develop new capabilities based on input from its large, diverse user base around the world. Through e-automate, we will continue to evolve our business to provide an edge in today's competitive market."

Viatek went live with e-automate just before the COVID-19 pandemic struck and the platform has already proved to be an invaluable resource. "E-automate has helped to adjust contracts to support our customers and has provided reports that give insights into billing trends, service calls, and staff utilisation so we can make informed decisions in this difficult time," affirms Damian.

Viatek is still at the start of its journey with e-automate but is already discovering additional functionalities that it is implementing. As Damian puts it, "It is an ERP we are growing into rather than our previous ERP that we were growing out of."

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