



“...having a system that enables him to oversee the whole supply chain has boosted efficiency ten-fold.”

Unlimited Magazine interview with Warren Bird CEO, FOB Direct

## Business Control in Real Time

When New Zealand clothing importer FOB Direct Ltd was first introduced to XSOL it had no idea how dramatically it would change the way its business was run.

### Business Outcomes:

- Real-time management of contract margins
- 100% visibility within supply chain
- Greatly improved accuracy
- Easy to implement and use; quick to change
- Management by exception
- Business control - ‘on time and in the right order’



“XSOL provides continuity throughout our business and visibility of all areas of our operation. I can see critical exceptions to business processes and get real time data on all areas. Things are far more accurate from a management perspective. I know what is happening in the business without having to be there or needing another tier in the management team to cover for me.”

#### GET PROCESSES INCONTROL

It started when FOB Direct used XSOL’s business modeling software to cast light on their business processes to assist in the selection of a new ERP system. XSOL’s ease of use impressed FOB Direct CEO, Warren Bird, so he decided to go to the next stage and automate the company’s entire business using XSOL’s software.

According to industry analysts, Delphi Group, 75% of tasks within most businesses are yet to be addressed by the corporate computer system. FOB Direct was aware of the inefficiency that stems from the lack of visibility of manual processes. Because FOB Direct’s current system did not cover the whole company, each staff member developed their own specific way of doing things.

While the work did get done, there were no universal checks or balances; if a mistake was made, often no one knew about it until it was too late. Day-to-day systems had inherent inefficiencies and when someone left, their operational system pretty much left with them.

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Today the story is very different thanks to XSOL, as Warren Bird says: “It is a full task management system that manages by exception. It controls work process flow so that everyone delivers their tasks within the process on time and in the right order. You can’t short-circuit a critical process; you have to work through it before going onto the next stage”.

“It overcomes the human weakness of working to the point of least resistance. If you have a heavy workload it is tempting to miss out time consuming, but critical, steps. With XSOL you cannot skip a step or take a shortcut without it being seen. Everyone is kept on-task”.

#### DYNAMIC MINUTE BY MINUTE MANGEMENT

Warren is able to monitor the system to make sure work is flowing as it should: “I know what can go wrong with orders, such as low margins, commitment to airfreight, or price differences with the customer’s order. Now, if there is a variation from the norm I am immediately alerted to it on my laptop. An order will not progress until I have made a decision and cleared the process.”

So how does it work? The process checks if an order has a poor profit margin and tells Warren immediately. He can let the order go through or send it back to the sales agent and get them to address the issue. If someone enters airfreight on an order an alarm is triggered because its use is an indicator that something has gone wrong.

Airfreight can dramatically eat into FOB Direct’s profit margin and Warren can see why it is being considered and decide to allow it - or not.

The system can check for any condition, raise an alarm and escalate as required. Warren is informed of delays or tasks not being actioned. He is in total control. The system identifies exceptions and sends them to his laptop instead of having to uncover them himself. It gives him a handle on what is happening throughout his organization – as it happens.

**Warren can see everything that happens, as it happens, in all locations - in real-time**

FOB Direct is linked to its China office and shipping agent. Warren can see everything that happens, as it happens, in all locations - in real-time. XSOL appears on each person’s screen as if they were in the same office - not several thousand kilometers away. FOB Direct controls what they can see and enables them to work directly on their tasks within FOB Direct’s database – there is no double handling

The resulting efficiency has enabled a much closer working relationship: “Now that our shipping agent can input directly into the system several steps have been cut out of our internal process. Our staff members in China have access to all the critical information they need, up to the minute, in real time.

Involving our China office has enabled them to enter the results of quality inspections on garment manufacture directly into the database. As soon as an order is OK'd it carries on, but if there is a quality issue XSOL notifies the person that needs to do the follow up, and makes any adjustments in pricing, shipping etc.”

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#### REAL TIME GROSS MARGIN

And with a wireless laptop in China it's as if Warren was at his desk in Auckland. He has also elevated management reporting to a new level: “XSOL enables me to report on any aspect of the business, be it sales, customer or buyer focused.

As orders progress, costs are added and subtracted as they occur; a loss on airfreight may be offset by a gain in foreign exchange. After each order I know exactly how much profit or loss we have made and can find where we can improve the process to do better next time.”

#### IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR TEAM

“At any time, I know who is my most profitable customer, my best sales person and most reliable supplier. Next, clients will be able to access this information and track their orders as they progress. XSOL is only going to get better. Having everyone use the same system to manage business process means unauthorized critical changes can't be made to the way a process is delivered. It doesn't matter where I choose to work and it is always secure.”

A feature of the XSOL software is how easy it is to change, in a matter of hours or days rather than months with other software, and users readily identify with the way it works. New and inexperienced staff can adapt to the XSOL system with minimal instruction.

“It is one of the easiest IT installations you could get. There was not one day of down time in the process and the few minor glitches that did occur did not once stop our business running.

To find out how **XSOL** can benefit your business contact [enquiry@xsol.com](mailto:enquiry@xsol.com)

