

# XeBusiness News

XeB supplies computer based supply chain solutions to Apparel companies for quick response and cost reduction - simply and economically



## Highlights Since Formation

Following the successful management buy-out (MBO) of the business unit from Kewill Systems PLC, XeBusiness was formed in December 1999 with the investment participation of a major client.

Since that time the company has:

- Been cash generative
- Been profitable
- Launched a 'state of the art' 32bit Windows

version of its applications software.

- Defined and launched a global marketing strategy for its specialist applications.
- Defined and launched a 'best of breed' marketing strategy for two major application modules.
- Set-up key partnerships and re-seller agreements.

- Launched an ASP – Application Service Provider – 'pay as you go' service to enable Apparel SME's (Small to Micro Sized Textile and Footwear Enterprises) adopt XeB applications software technology at very low cost.

XeB are now strategically placed to take advantage of the coming economic upturn.

## 32Bit 'New Technology' Software Launched - Xe-ERP New Technology

Earlier this year, after extensive trials, XeB successfully launched a new technology version of its ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) applications software.

The software is MS Windows compliant and incorporates a modern GUI (Graphical User Interface) with standard 'point and click'. Full advantage is taken of the products 32bit data processing and program execution capability. Novell is also supported as a popular alternative operating platform.

In addition to all the prior comprehensive applications functionality, additional and

enhanced management information features have been incorporated. A powerful auto email alert system can be customized to pro-actively warn and inform supervisors, managers, partners and colleagues of deviation from plan based on a pre-determined rule set to enable action to be taken to head off any problems affecting contract fulfillment or sourcing.

Also included are additional and powerful logistics and tracking options for textile and footwear companies sourcing and manufacturing offshore.

Incorporation of new and powerful technologies to facilitate communication and information sharing also

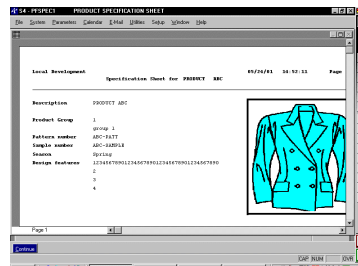
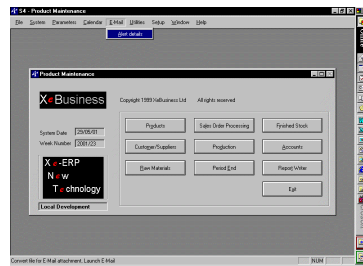
feature within the new product covering EDI and integrated email with the option to auto attach reports, enquiries and documents for dispatch both internally and externally – desktop to desktop.

Product imaging linked to specification sheets has been incorporated as standard with pictures of product either acquired from digital camera download or scanned in.

This ground breaking new product sets the standard for business management systems for SME's operating in the textile and footwear sector.

A number of attractive pricing options are available to facilitate adoption of the system, including a flexible and innovative 'pay as you use' option for small companies.

Textile and footwear companies face many challenges. Xe-ERP will form the core of their strategy to survive and prosper.



Sample 32bit GUI screens



*XeB Offices in Manchester*

**“Pay As You Go”  
service available to  
enable Apparel  
SME’s adopt XeB  
Technology.”**

*Norwood*



*Castleblair Ltd.*



**Eamonn Molloy, a director of XeB,  
leads the customer care team.**

## Special Offers for Our Users

### Are you a Good Old Dos/16bit Xe-ERP Version User?

Time to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with an upgrade to the NEW 32bit Windows Version. Why?

- Better performance
- Easier to learn – standard Windows ‘look & feel’
- More secure
- Scaleable
- Virtually risk free upgrade – all functionality standard and bespoke available with the new platform
- Powerful new enhancements include integrated email, imaging, specification sheets, drill down data mining for information access, pro-active email alerts to warn of impending deviations from plan, etc.

#### The Deal

If you upgrade before March 2002 the product upgrade is free of charge, You pay for re-training, re-installation and conversion services only.

Xe-ERP New Technology will underpin your business operations and add value to them.

***Note that XeB are applying a legacy systems surcharge to all support and maintenance agreements for DOS systems. This is refundable against the cost of the 32bit upgrade in 2002.***

### ACT NOW

### Interim IT Manager Programme

Need a temporary manager to manage your XeB system or assist with bringing an upgrade or new systems module to bear? We can supply a consultant under this programme launched last year at highly competitive rates.

### Escrow Service

We now offer an escrow arrangement for the version of program source code in use at your site(s).

The charge - made annually in advance - varies based on the number of XeB modules deployed and their criticality.

Contact us for more information and a quote.

### Long Running Cleardowns, End of Day and Other Data File Intensive Tasks?

We have launched a new Record Server file handling system for both 16bit DOS and 32bit Windows systems.

Overnight batch runs which have taken long to complete linked to size of data files, will now run and complete in minutes with consequent less risk of these tasks failing and having to be re-run.

### Book up to 10 Days of Professional Services at Half Price!

Users can book up to 10 days of services whether for software development/customization, training or on site consultancy advice and assistance at half our daily charge-out rate.

***This equates to a rate of £400 per day and is extremely good value for money.***

## Client Care - Definitely Not a Call Centre Approach!

Client care is a strategic and vital part of XeB Operations.

We believe we provide a standard of ‘help-desk’ and services support for our products that is second to none in the industry. The regular feedback we receive from our client base on the service provided validates this.

Eamonn is well known to all our clients and he is ably supported by three other specialists who are uniquely expert in the business domain – the textile, footwear and soft goods sector – our applications software products and how they are applied in an IT context to provide business management solutions.

Although we plan to increase usage of the Internet/www to disseminate information and for routine communication, XeB remains

firmly committed to providing an expert you know at the end of the telephone to provide advice, solve problems and stay proactively in touch, until the problem is resolved.

In this regard, our support operation is about as far removed from the ‘call centre’ approach – now commonplace – as it is possible to get and XeB intends to keep it this way.

The service we provide is not inexpensive, but in context of supporting our systems that perform mission critical business tasks in client companies, it is excellent value for money.

We continue to strive for excellence in this area and have extended the scope of the service for 2002 as featured elsewhere in this issue.

## Scope of Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement Extended

### Annual Health Check and Systems Audit now included within Service Agreement\*

XeB are pleased to announce that the scope of this service has been extended to include the provision of an annual Systems Audit/Health Check. This programme was previously available at £1000+.

The Audit will involve a detailed on-site examination of how the XeB applications software is being deployed in your company to cover such vital issues as systems management, housekeeping covering,

data and program back-up, security disaster recovery, incident logging and general performance issues.

Also included will be a training audit to ensure the user's team is effectively using the system and is fully aware of its powerful, wide-ranging and comprehensive functionality.

The consultant will then document his findings and recommendations in the form of a report, highlighting areas

requiring attention.

This new facet of the annual service will continue to ensure that our users get the best possible value from their investment in XeB applications software.

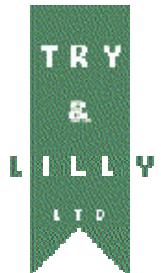
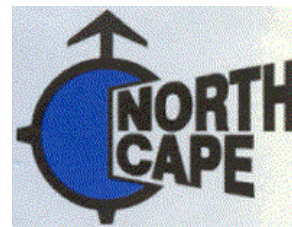
\* Travel and subsistence only will be charged at cost for site visits.

### Out of Normal Business Hours Support - Move Towards 24x7 Service Availability

XeB have launched an outside normal business hours support service to cover early morning, evenings, overnight and weekends. A customized arrangement can be developed to cover specific client requirements.



Frank Theak & Roskilly Ltd



### World Class 'Best of Breed' Sub-Systems

Whereas XeB targets its integrated business management systems at small, medium and micro-sized textile and footwear suppliers, four sub-systems within our ERP portfolio are marketed as specialist best of breed systems suitable for implementation within larger organizations also.

These are:

#### Xe-Trader

This low cost system is ideal for small to medium sized companies who source and then supply fully factored apparel products to wholesale and retail outlets of all sizes. Functionality includes specialist sales order processing, finished goods stock management, purchasing and managing retail concessions. The software can easily be linked to a variety of accounting systems.

#### Xe-BCP - Bar Coded Production Control

Ideal for manufacturing units of all sizes based in the UK or overseas, this sub-system will deal with all aspects of shop floor production control, productivity management, WIP and build up to gross payroll preparation. The system can be interfaced to any other systems in use within a company for data sharing and exchange.

#### Xe-RTS - Real Time Production Control

This is a world class integrated shop floor data collection, time and attendance management and production control system that manages all shop floor manufacturing ops in real time. ROI/Payback can be within eight months of implementation. The system can be interfaced to any other ERP systems in use within a textile enterprise.

#### Xe-WMS - Specialist Apparel Warehouse Management

The system is in use at multiple garment warehouse sites across the UK dealing with both boxed and hanging garments. It is totally configurable to a specific warehouse environment and has been developed to handle the requirements of both major high street retailers (eg Marks & Spencer Plc) and also the work wear and corporate wear requirements (man pack functionality) of blue chip service organizations.

## Competitiveness: A Journey, Not A Destination

### Will Your Company Stay the Course?



David Cullis – MD of XeB



The textile sector in the UK continues to languish for the most part in intensive care.

Having met many executives in this sector, I continue to be struck by the wide gap between the few companies who have got their management act together and the rest who struggle along until a final crisis pushes them over the edge.

The knee-jerk reaction to the increased level of price competition has been to curtail manufacturing in the UK and source product off shore from low wage cost regions. This strategy is fine in terms of reducing the unit cost of manufacture, but it does bring a number of logistics and other management issues in its wake. Quality, lead times to replenish and uncertainty of supply are just a few issues that now need to be dealt with.

However, any cost advantage obtained by sourcing off shore is soon dissipated as everyone starts to do it.

***Given the above, the competitive battleground continues to be driven by the same strategic factors that have always applied, namely doing more with less and doing it better and faster than the competition.***

There is no doubt that without the aid of effective business management tools, this continual process of performance measurement to drive operational improvements will not be achievable.

Quite simply, you cannot control and refine what you do not measure. What you are not measuring therefore is probably out of control.

The reluctance to invest in effective technology based management systems in the textile sector is certainly one major reason why it has remained almost perpetually in recession to a greater or lesser degree in recent decades,

regardless of the generally prevailing economic conditions. When investment is made, it is usually piecemeal and fragmented.

Your computer system, like your company, has to change to model the on-going process of improvement that is needed to retain and increase competitiveness.

An effective computer based business management system will rapidly (in months, not years!) recover any investment made in it.

#### How?

***It will reduce the cost of doing business.***

And

***It will form the core of a service level improvement programme that is essential to maintain and increase sales.***

#### Business Cost Reduction

- Reduce stocks of finished goods and improve their availability to your customers. (Information from your computer system will replace inventory).
- Reduce stock of raw materials and components.
- Reduce deployment of fixed assets. For example, reduced stockholding of finished goods and raw materials will reduce the requirement for expensive warehouse space.
- Reduce the administration overhead: less paper handling, capture data once only to improve accuracy and faster access to information held digitally for decision making and progress chasing.

***Overall, you benefit from being more price-competitive and from better margins on sales.***

#### Service Level Improvements

- Achieve more reliable delivery times.
- Achieve shorter order to delivery times.
- Respond more rapidly and effectively to market changes for your products.
- Improve product availability.
- Provide a more responsive after sales service.

***Not having an effective computer system to underpin trading operations obviously puts a textile company at a serious competitive disadvantage.***

Fortunately, systems like XeB's are available with very short paybacks on investment.

However, ensuring systems like these are deployed and used effectively remains a challenge. Investments also have to be made in training, consultancy and in customizing the system to reflect changes within the supply chain and improvements to business processes.

The (too) few companies who continue to prosper understand the importance of effectively deploying technology tools and are not reluctant to make investments in them.

More companies need to follow suit. The systems are available. However, the will to make the changes necessary to bring these systems to bear remains the major challenge facing companies in this difficult sector.

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