

# Promotional Forming & Finishing

**Growth, Sunshine and Flexibility!**

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## Growth, Sunshine and Flexibility!

Promotional Forming and Finishing (PFF) are a plastics thermoforming company specializing in producing packaging products for the food industry. Based in the outskirts of Bradford in Yorkshire, PFF are an ambitious and responsive family owned firm.

Managing Director Andrew Bairstow:

*“Our ability to react is the key to success for our business. Look at the weather today.”*

Outside the sun is shining and the temperature is in the mid to high twenties.

*“This weekend is probably going to be the first major BBQ weekend of the year and our customers know it: Demand for food trays have gone through the roof. This week they want to almost double their normal quantities and it’s up to us to respond. Normally we’d be able to supply them from stock but this week they’ve sent us a new tool they want us to use. So we’ll have to pull out all the stops but we’ll do it.”*

This is one of the main reasons that Bairstow believes is responsible for PFF’s continued success:

*“Our customers know that we not only have the capacity to meet their changing demand but also, with one phone call they can get through to the man who can make the decision that we should do so – me!”*

This strategy is certainly bearing fruit. This year will see PFF almost double its turnover. But this is only the beginning. Bairstow again:

*“We have ambitious goals for this company and this is just the start. We realize we have to grow to remain competitive and we have plans in place that will ensure that we do just that.”*

One thing that will help under-pin that growth is Central One’s Enterprise One Operational Business Software. PFF made the decision to move to the thermoforming version of the system in November of 2005. Speaking in May 2006 is Bairstow happy with the decision he has taken?

*“Absolutely! Yes, it was the right decision. Could we have continued to run the company the size that it was without it? Yes, probably but with difficulty. Could*

*we run the business that PFF will become in a year or so's time? No, definitely not."*

Take the Estimation, Quotation and Enquiry (EQE) front end. Bairstow again:

*"The quotation system is fantastic. It is quick, accurate and excellent. It mirrors exactly what we do and is at least 500% faster than our old system when I batch my quotes together."*

As PFF generate over 100 quotes per month this time saving can be significant. Speed of response can also be improved; quotes, once finalized, are e-mailed directly to the client from the system.

Cost control is also important:

*"The system gives us much tighter control of our costs. For instance the transport costs we use in the quote are now accurate. We used to lose money by quoting transport in an ad hoc fashion. Invariably when we came to ship the product the actual transport costs were higher than our finger in the air estimates. That has all changed, we use accurate costs now. And of course increased accuracy leads to increased profitability because all our costs are now properly accounted for."*

Once a quote is complete the system tracks differences in purchasing costs from those quoted. This ensures that materials are bought at the correct price and offers an opportunity to correct what otherwise could be a costly mistake.

Crucially the system also helps him make those vital decisions:

*"When a customer calls to change quantities and deliveries I can get his details on the screen. This includes the original quote showing pricing details together with his stock situation and his job flow. We can then talk about his requirements and come to an informed decision about what we need to do. Before I would have to hunt out the details and call him back. Now our response is much more professional."*

Repeatability is also a factor. The system can show a history of transactions with each client. Bairstow therefore knows instantly what he quoted last time and therefore has a basis on which he can steer the discussions in the future.

The system also gives him an opportunity to see how things are operating internally. Bairstow again:

*"Little things can sometimes easily slip through the net. Errors can and do happen. Without the system people had the opportunity to cover up their mistakes. This means two things: Firstly we lose money and secondly nothing is done to stop that mistake reoccurring. Now when something goes wrong the*

*system tells me. I can take corrective action and put things in place to ensure it doesn't happen again."*

But it is the big things that are the most important. PFF has recently won a multi-million pounds order from a major client. Could Bairstow have handled that order without the system?

*"Well possibly, but it would have really stretched us. That order has 20 lines and requires us to hold 5 to 10 weeks of stock, minimum to maximum. Logistically it is a complex task. Our Enterprise One system gives us visibility of what we need when we need it. It is an awfully lot easier now we have the system."*

And a final word on support?

*"Central One's support is excellent, Mel Fletcher, in particular is superb. He talks our language and never tries to baffle you. And when Mel promises you something he certainly delivers."*

Enough said. Time to enjoy that sunshine!