

Flakeboard

How Flakeboard Aligned Its Multisite Organization by Applying TEC's Evaluation and Selection Methodology

CASE STUDY

Company Background

Flakeboard is the largest manufacturer of particleboard and medium-density fiberboard panels in North America. Since 1960, Flakeboard has focused on growth within the composite panel industry and on the formation of a highly integrated business model through constant reinvestment and optimization. The company has grown from a pilot plant designed to showcase panel manufacturing equipment, to a multisite, world-scale producer of composite wood products.

Challenges: Scalability, Integration, and Centralization

Flakeboard needed a centralized, flexible, and scalable system that would easily integrate with disparate IT systems in global regions, while fulfilling the unique needs of the companies it was acquiring. A significant portion of its growth is attributable to the acquisition of several new facilities, which also meant acquiring and integrating disparate IT environments.

A project team was assembled to assess all Flakeboard site locations, systems, and needs in order to provide the best solution. The project involved evaluating the existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to determine if it could adequately support and integrate with the multiple systems already installed in the newly acquired companies. Once the evaluation was complete, the team needed to decide between upgrading and implementing a new system.

The new system would also have to integrate with Maximo, an enterprise asset management (EAM) application installed in Flakeboard's US mills and mandated to play a continued role in their strategic vision.

"Our current ERP system could not communicate effectively with the different systems in the other facilities. We needed to replace it for operational efficiency," said Mike Anstey, IT manager, Flakeboard.

Technology Evaluation Centers (TEC) and Flakeboard worked together to shape the evaluation and selection project into a comparison between best-of-breed technology and integrated systems. "We needed a better understanding of the ERP systems available to us," said Bob Lloyd, manager of business and logistic solutions at Flakeboard, "to efficiently narrow our choices down to the top four contenders."

Solution: Reducing the Costs, Risks, and Time Associated with Software Selection

The initial phases of Flakeboard's extended evaluation and selection project involved collecting high-level, prioritized requirements from each business unit. As the project progressed, TEC's methodology offered a means to build consensus amongst the different facilities, while making each feel that its needs were well represented throughout the decision-making process.

By taking advantage of a standardized request for proposal (RFP) template customized for Flakeboard's specific requirements and integrated with TEC's decision model and support engine, eBestMatch™, Flakeboard's project team was able to analyze software according to its priorities. The team also used the "what if" scenario capabilities provided by the engine, which made it possible to evaluate solutions based on current and future needs.

TEC's analysts played an essential role in Flakeboard's requirement-gathering process, providing valuable guidance and training. "We worked closely with Flakeboard to help create an RFP template that was customized to their specific requirements," said Denis Rousseau, director of project delivery at TEC, "and supported them throughout the process of developing the categories necessary to accommodate a two-pronged evaluation of best-of-breed and integrated solutions."

Benefits: Best-fit Software Selected Using TEC's Methodology

Flakeboard realized key benefits by using an impartial third party throughout the software evaluation and selection process. Flakeboard is currently implementing a scalable, viable system that integrates seamlessly with all of its facilities and IT systems. The new solution meets its existing needs and will support future growth and strategic acquisitions.

"After evaluating our shortlist of vendors, we decided to go with Epicor's Vantage product," said Bob Lloyd, "It was a detailed yet efficient exercise to work through the process, but we were confident this system most effectively aligned with our facilities' business activities, while providing the flexibility required for continued growth."

Another benefit TEC provided was the objectivity and guidance it offered during the vendor pre-screen process.

This gave both Flakeboard and its shortlist of potential vendors the clarity to make informed decisions, saving time and associated costs. For instance, one vendor actually pulled out when it realized the project involved customization needs that its resources were simply insufficient to fulfill. Had the relationship progressed, it would have been costly for both parties, since such mismatches only become apparent later, during implementation.

"While every technology deployment comes with its own unique set of challenges, the TEC process was more efficient both from a cost and time perspective," commented Bob Lloyd. "We would highly recommend Technology Evaluation Centers' services and methodologies to other companies looking to simplify a complex process."

Flakeboard is currently implementing its new system.

“The TEC evaluation and selection methodology proved more cost-effective and helped us more clearly identify a best-fit vendor solution, when compared with other current methods.”

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– Bob Lloyd

Manager, Business and Logistic Solutions

About TEC:

To learn more about Flakeboard, please visit www.flakeboard.com

TEC is a leading provider of research and decision support technology designed to help businesses evaluate and select the software solutions that best fit their particular needs. Its mission is to reduce the costs, risks, and time associated with software selection and implementation. Decision-makers from around the world come to TEC when they want to make informed decisions, rapidly and cost-effectively.

For more information, please visit:

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