



DIRECTCORPORATECLOTHING

Software solutions  
for the Apparel Industry



# Growth without Cost

Computer software designed to face the challenges of the professional clothing industry is helping Direct Corporate Clothing stay ahead of the competition

Investing in the future is important to Direct Corporate Clothing. Over the past few years, it has acquired a 60,000 square metre warehouse and set-up a dedicated, wholly-owned garment-manufacturing facility in China. Crucially, it has also installed a state-of-the-art Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution from ARIA Systems to support business growth and underpin its investment.

As a result of installing the new computer software, Direct Corporate Clothing is now well placed in a competitive marketplace where all suppliers are looking for that vital 'competitive edge'.

The latest version of the ARIA software with a new corporate clothing module has enabled Direct Corporate Clothing to set new standards of customer service leading to some significant new contracts since its introduction.

The company. The business was growing and our current system couldn't support it." It was soon appreciated that Direct Corporate Clothing needed an industry specific system capable of meeting the diverse requirements of suppliers operating in the corporate clothing and workwear sectors and of course, one that had the scalability to support its growth for the future.

The selection process involved Direct Corporate Clothing evaluating several potential business system suppliers operating in the clothing sector before entering contracts. ARIA was selected based on its ability to demonstrate the capability and user-friendly nature of its product solution and the willingness of the ARIA team to work in partnership with Direct Corporate Clothing.

"It's robust and simple to use," Gini says. "It was also an easy and smooth transition for our staff to make from the previous system."

The company also liked ARIA's hands-on approach. Following an initial demonstration, ARIA led a two-day workshop at Direct Corporate Clothing's offices to demonstrate the software operating in their own workplace.

## Building solid foundations

Based in Oldbury, West Midlands, Direct Corporate Clothing designs and supplies uniforms to the transport, logistics, construction, retail, and oil and gas industries as well as local government organisations.

Since the company was established in 1999, its business has witnessed continual growth in sales and product lines. The growth in business - and the increased volume and complexity of activity that came with it - started to place great strain on the existing computer system and business processes.

Joint managing director of Direct Corporate Clothing **Gini Sohail** says: "Our previous system didn't have the scalability of the new system. We had to change for the good of the

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"We processed examples of their information through the system so that they could see the software working in their environment," ARIA's business development manager **John Driscoll** says. "There's a big difference between having a demo for a couple of hours and actually sitting there and operating the system using your own data and 'real life' incidents."

Essex-based ARIA has been providing the apparel industry with state-of-the-art ERP solutions for 15 years and Direct Corporate Clothing is one of more than 450 apparel companies using its product suites worldwide to gain competitive advantages.



Direct Corporate Clothing's head offices in Oldbury, West Midlands



**ARIA's ERP solutions have the scalability to support Direct Corporate Clothing's future growth**

**More control for the customer - flexibility is key**

In the complex uniform and workwear industry suppliers are no stranger to processing hundreds of small transactions a day, from customers with diverse support supply requirements. It is therefore important that their computer system is designed with flexibility as a key feature, as all accounts can have individual profiles.

Direct Corporate Clothing was keen to make sure it could take full advantage of the increasing demand for web based ordering facilities and worked with ARIA to develop the Corporate Clothing Management

Going live in August 2009, the new module allows Direct Corporate Clothing to create an original website for each of its customers within hours, displaying their specific products, prices and corporate look. Besides placing orders, customers can also use the website to look up order history, create management and analysis reports, track shipment and check uniform entitlement and stock availability.

Gini says: "It's a different way of selling our services. For the customer it makes sense because they can place and track orders without even having to contact our help desk - they can just go straight to their own website."

**Visible results**

Giving the customer increased access to information makes the order process quicker and simpler for them and it also enables them to better control their costs. But the benefits of web-ordering aren't one-way: it also frees up the staff at Direct Corporate Clothing, saving them time and money too.

"Previously, if I had won new contracts I would have had to employ more staff to process the orders manually through the system," Gini says. "But now that the clients are putting the orders on themselves, it's not costing us more to take more customers on."

If achieving growth without cost is impressive, doing so in a tough economic climate is doubly impressive. For Direct Corporate Clothing, ARIA's ERP solutions are proving to be more than just a means of surviving the recession - they are a profitable investment. ■

**Maximising efficiency**

Its latest core system is ARIA 4XP. It was chosen by Direct Corporate Clothing to eliminate procedural inefficiencies on all production fronts and to enhance the warehousing and sales processes.

Microsoft-based and with the ability to integrate with existing systems, ARIA 4XP gives the supplier complete control of all tasks from initial enquiry to order fulfilment. They can manage and forecast stock, track products, produce sales and purchase orders quickly and easily as well as creating financial and management reports.

While traditional methods such as spreadsheets and other standalone systems need to be updated and distributed manually, ARIA 4XP works from a fully integrated and centralised database. This means that staff and supply chain partners who are entitled to see the information will have access to updates in real time - wherever they are in the world.

Besides controlling stock and managing finance for the supplier, the system has also helped to increase efficiency and improve customer service levels by speeding up the entire process. This is just as well, because ARIA managing director Tony Mather believes that customers are starting to up the stakes in their tenders.

"It's become far more competitive now, so you need an edge. This can be achieved using an efficient and flexible computer system that gets orders to your customers as quickly as possible," he says.

module, integrating the Direct Corporate Clothing website with the ARIA business modules.

"You're always under pressure from your customers," Gini says. "We're in a service-based business and we have to listen to what our customers are saying and comply with their needs. We've had ARIA helping us to make sure we meet our customers' requirements."

**For more information contact ARIA Systems:**  
 Tel: +44 (0)208 502 5553  
 Email: john@ariasystems.co.uk  
 Website: www.ariasystems.co.uk

