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Hutchinson Engineering Cuts 2 Days a Week of Manual Reporting Time While Improving Delivery Reliability With Business Central Insights

Executive Summary

Hutchinson Engineering, a Northern Ireland manufacturing firm, upgraded its ERP platform to Microsoft Business Central and required a modern reporting solution to replace its legacy SQL-based reporting setup. Heavy reliance on Excel had made reporting inefficient, error-prone, and inconsistent. By implementing Business Central Insights (BCI), Hutchinson regained trust in its data, identified and resolved bottlenecks, and significantly improved on-time delivery reporting. Within the first year, the company reduced 2 days of weekly manual effort, uncovered hidden data issues, and enabled leadership to make faster, more informed decisions based on live, consistent information.

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The Challenge

When Hutchinson moved to SaaS-based Business Central, their established ways of getting data disappeared overnight. The IT team could no longer pull information directly, and the stopgap solution, Excel, quickly revealed its flaws. Reports became inconsistent, manual effort ballooned, and confidence in the numbers plummeted.

"We moved to SaaS and suddenly couldn't get to the information we needed, causing all sorts of headaches," said **Neville Glenn, IT Manager at Hutchinson.** Without a centralised reporting method, different departments pulled their own figures, often producing conflicting results, a problem magnified by the complexity of Hutchinson's multi-stage manufacturing process.

The complexity of Hutchinson's manufacturing process only made things harder. Many of their products are made up of hundreds of parts and subassemblies, passing through multiple work centres, such as cutting, folding, fabrication, and painting, with delays possible at any stage. Standard reports couldn't easily provide a complete, accurate picture, and bottlenecks were often hidden until they caused wider problems.

The result was a fragmented reporting environment where more time was spent validating numbers than acting on them. Monthly production meetings were driven by outdated data, and performance reviews relied on static spreadsheets that took days to prepare.

As **Robert Walker, Business Improvement Manager,** puts it: **"There was no single source of truth, and every department had its own version of the figures. It was a reporting nightmare."**

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Why Business Central Insights (BCI)

Hutchinson evaluated other reporting options and the possibility of building their own Power BI reports, but found them either too complex, too limited, or too slow to deliver value.

> We looked at Jet Reports, but it's Excel-based, you need to be quite experienced. It's clunky, it's hard to build, and wasn't giving us the visuals we needed.
>
> **Neville Glenn,** IT Manager

With over 400 ready-made reports covering multiple business areas, BCI offered an immediate, out-of-the-box solution that required no extra infrastructure or development effort. The breadth of content meant they could focus on the reports that mattered most, such as on-time delivery, while knowing other capabilities were ready to explore as their needs evolved.

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"We needed a solution that delivered answers instantly. BCI did exactly that, and we were impressed by how quickly we could access our data and start using it to improve our business. **Neville** continued.

By seeing how the reports were structured, the team also gained a better understanding of how Business Central data fits together, improving their own Power BI skills in the process.

Given the speed of implementation, the range of insights available, and the ability to adapt reports for their unique manufacturing processes,

Neville said,
The cost was easy to justify, given the exceptional value it provided."

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Tangible Results

With BCI implemented across Sales, Manufacturing, Finance, Inventory and Purchasing, Hutchinson experienced measurable operational improvements. One of the most critical wins was restoring confidence in their on-time delivery reporting.

On-time delivery is a core KPI for Hutchinson's largest customers. Before BCI, internal debates over delivery dates and status were common, as production, sales, and CRM teams worked off different versions of the truth. Now, the COO uses BCI's Sales On-Time Delivery report daily to drill down into delays and drive accountability across departments.

The COO actively uses the report, and he thinks they're brilliant, and was immediately impressed with the ability to drill down by customer and by month to investigate delivery issues. It has prompted a level of operational dialogue and accountability that simply didn't exist before.

– Robert Walker

They've also worked closely with Dejan to adapt the standard reports for their unique manufacturing processes.

We asked Dejan for a few tweaks and ideas, and the results have been amazing! Now we have the exact views we need to make decisions quickly. Neville said.

In addition to tracking delivery performance, Hutchinson has also started applying BCI's On-Time analytics to evaluate supplier performance. By monitoring whether materials and components are arriving on schedule, they are now able to hold suppliers accountable to key KPIs and use data to improve procurement planning and reliability across their supply chain.

Internally, Hutchinson has begun treating each department as a customer, using BCI to track handovers between production stages such as cutting, folding, fabrication, and painting. This has provided visibility into previously hidden bottlenecks and enabled the business to address internal inefficiencies. Internal on-time routing operations are now considered just as critical as external delivery KPIs, as delays between internal departments can significantly impact overall performance.

Beyond delivery reporting, BCI also helped identify errors in Bills of Materials and outdated supplier records, surfacing issues that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. **"The reports didn't just give us answers – they exposed problems and pointed us toward solutions," Robert** added.

One of the most significant gains came in time savings. Prior to BCI, teams across Hutchinson were collectively spending 2 days per week manually cleaning data, validating numbers, and preparing reports. With BCI, that time has been reclaimed for analysis and decision-making.

"Our leaders are over the moon, they're finally making decisions rather than spending time pulling reports," said Neville.

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What's Next »»

With a solid reporting foundation in place, Hutchinson is now focused on expanding usage and training across the business. While some teams are already customising reports and applying advanced filters, others are just beginning to explore what the platform can do. To support this, internal surveys and targeted tutorials are planned to encourage broader adoption and ensure all departments can tap into the same level of insight.

There's also a drive to improve Power BI skills across the company, so users feel confident applying filters, creating bookmarks, and tailoring reports to their needs. As data capture in production improves, through better time recording and backflushing, Hutchinson expects to make fuller use of reports such as actual vs. estimated cost analysis in Sales.

They also aim to incorporate more custom fields into reports and make fuller use of the many BCI reports they already have, gradually expanding beyond their current "highlight reel" of key reports.

Internally we're looking at using the data to drive decision-making, for example, tracking performance per internal on-time delivery. That's our next step, said **Robert Walker.**

We've only scratched the surface. But already the value is clear, it's saving us time, giving us confidence in our data, and opening up insights we never had before. We're genuinely excited about what comes next, added **Neville.**

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