Leon Paul

A fourth generation family business founded over 100 years ago, Leon Paul is now the largest manufacturer of sports fencing equipment globally. Known for producing the Rolls Royce standard of fencing kit, Leon Paul operations stretch to every continent in the world.

Challenge

- Too many manual, paper-based processes, creating difficulties in managing back-end operations.
- Poorly rated customer service causing strain for the team and for customers.
- A limited view of performance and costs, causing high levels of inefficiencies.

Approach

- An OrderWise ERP solution to connect business operations from end-to-end, enabling live task and data management globally.
- Component manufacturing, WMS and works order planning to manage complex BOM's and create automated, digitalised processes.
- Scalable and customisable software to fit Leon Paul's requirements at each stage.

Results

- Customer service is vastly improved, and working is less stressful and more productive for the team.
- Capacity boosted and costs reduced, with efficiency gains counteracting any losses from Covid-19 restrictions.
- Globally, operations are much smoother and largely automated, leading to business growth.

⦿ Leon Paul

Manufacturing their products almost entirely from their London premises, Leon Paul has developed close ties to the Olympics, hosting the only large dedicated fencing centre in the UK and running a training program that houses team GB.

To create high levels of service and efficiency as the business continued to grow, as well as maintaining the top standards of quality control and production of innovative new products, Leon Paul was keen to find a software provider that could match their requirements across the board.

Watch the Leon Paul video case study

We visited the Leon Paul premises in central London to learn how the business has developed since implementing OrderWise.
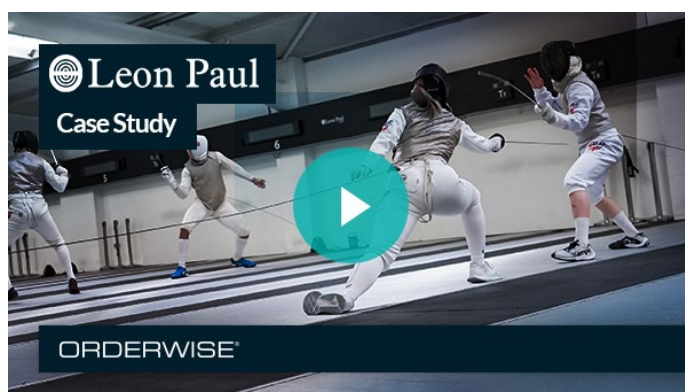
Watch the video here

The Requirement

Back in 2017, Leon Paul was already considered to produce the best quality fencing equipment, but as the business stretched globally and orders continued to increase, the business' service levels and order management were starting to struggle under the volume of tasks.

> *"Pre-OrderWise, to deal with paperwork, we'd have to physically go through every single piece of paper, and look at every order individually to hand out work. Now, I can see it all on a single system, so it saves a lot of time – it saves hours per day. "*
>
> **Clement Garcia, Despatch Manager**

The majority of the business was paper-based, interspersed with a handful of systems, including Sage 50 for handling accounts and Magento 1 for ecommerce operations. However, with no system connecting operations and simply too many manual, paper-based functions for the size of the business, numerous inefficiencies, error-prone processes and the time and effort taken to finish tasks were all becoming a strain on the team.

> *"The problems were that we had no control of ordering from stock to delivery, no barcoding technology in the warehouse, no form of KPIs to manage our performance, and very little understanding of cost control. It was just a very, very archaic paper-based system and that was starting to cost the business money and value."*
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> **James Fay, Commercial Director**

Tasks and picks were assigned to the warehouse team by going through the details of each order by hand and order progress was marked by manually re-entering details into separate Windows folders.

> *"We'd have to physically go through every single piece of paper, and look at every order individually to hand out work."*
>
> **Clement Garcia, Despatch Manager**

Implementing OrderWise

To help the business processes reflect the high level of quality control and innovation shown in their products, Leon Paul was looking to reimagine their operational management throughout their business - from purchasing and sales, right through to order handling and despatch.

> *"We were looking for an affordable system that wasn't too scary for the partners of the business. I went around numerous systems that lacked scalability until, believe it or not, OrderWise was recommended to us by a direct competitor of OrderWise. The good thing is that we've had the ability to pick and choose the route we want to go down. We got a price that was right and OrderWise enabled us to start it small and build it up as we grow."*
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> **James Fay, Commercial Director**

When completing product builds after manufacturing each individual part in their onsite ironworks, the business also has a large number of complex product BOMs, with multi-level components depending on customer requirements and preferences. High-level stock control, order management, and manufacturing software with complex component handling and kitting were needed to minimise errors and maximise efficiency.

> *"We had put off moving to an automated system for quite a while because we've got quite a complicated product mix, but OrderWise has done very well in terms of adapting to the specific needs of the business. We've seen huge improvements - the best thing I can say about it is I don't hear much about it, which means it's working."*
>
> **Alex Paul, Managing Director**

Having scaled their software to meet their needs each step of the way, Leon Paul now has a full OrderWise ERP and WMS solution, with software modules for business intelligence, KPI Dashboards, CRM, Stock Replenishment, Transfers, Returns, Component Manufacturing, Kitting, Mobile WMS Devices for Android, Ecommerce Integration with Magento 2, Accounts Integrations with Sage 50, and Courier Integrations with DHL, NetDespatch, Parcelforce and Royal Mail.
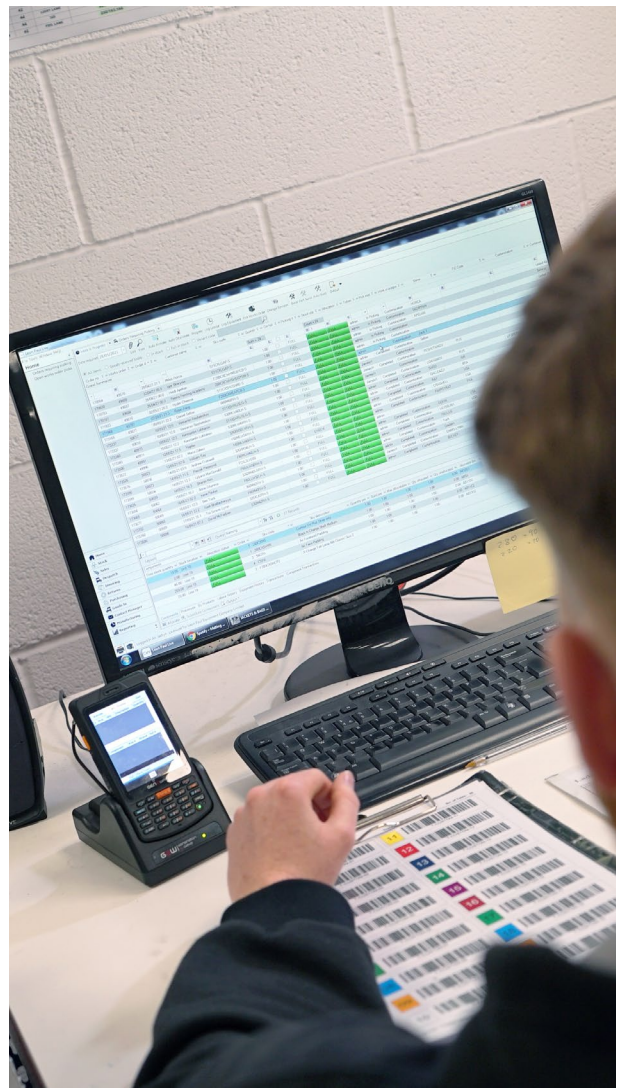
To cater to every unique requirement and flexibly meet their precise needs as they evolve, the business has also been able to implement a range of customised OrderWise reports and features.

"OrderWise is continually being kept up to date, and if ever we do find any errors or problems, they get looked at and resolved. It's very easy to use and, as an additional bonus, it's made my life a lot easier, so it's very handy."

Clement Garcia, Despatch Manager

"Working with OrderWise, we've found the right people with the right resource to understand our business. When we log a support call, we can pretty much guarantee who's going to pick the call up."

James Fay, Commercial Director

The OrderWise Solution

Since implementing their OrderWise solution, Leon Paul has been able to automate many processes and see vast efficiency improvements.

It has eased pressure on employees, improved order management and customer service, and contributed to a nearly £3 million increase in yearly turnover.

"Covid-19 has meant that this year we are 30% down on the previous year, but because of the efficiency we have, we will be at about the same level of profit. OrderWise has just added value all around the business. I still work the same amount of hours, but I reckon I probably do three times the work and I'm not three times as stressed. So, from that perspective alone, OrderWise is a good thing to have."

James Fay, Commercial Director

Warehouse and manufacturing efficiency

Using OrderWise Warehouse Management Software (WMS) to connect operations both within the warehouse and to the rest of the business, Leon Paul has digitally transformed their control of stock, builds, order processing, purchasing and more.

"It's so much easier to pick and ship orders. Since using OrderWise, the amount of orders we can handle has changed dramatically. Before, our record number in a day was below 200. Whereas, last Christmas, OrderWise allowed us to process almost double."

Modestas Simkus, Warehouse Supervisor

With hundreds of different and incredibly complicated configurations for each Leon Paul product, OrderWise Stock Control offered a simple inputting system to assign product codes, and any customisations can be assigned at the point of sale. As order details are shared automatically within OrderWise, many old, error-prone processes have been removed entirely.

Plus, with the OrderWise Works Order Planner and Component Manufacturing software, the complex nature of Leon Paul's warehouse manufacturing can be automatically structured into the most efficient and smooth workflow for the warehouse team.

"OrderWise has made our life so much easier now everything is managed in one place. We don't have any folders, we don't have a mess in the warehouse as well, and it's much easier to work between our warehouses and other departments as well, especially for manufacturing."

Modestas Simkus, Warehouse Supervisor

Using the Mobile WMS for Android Devices (HHTs), orders are automatically allocated to pickers within OrderWise and picked using quick and accurate barcode technology, all while informing pickers of the most efficient routing to complete tasks.

"OrderWise has really modernised the warehouse for us. Instead of having to look at the system continuously, you can just walk up to a box, check it using the HHT barcode technology and it will tell you what is there or where additional stock is in the building."

Clement Garcia, Despatch Manager

Providing a clear view of all the products that are in stock and out of stock, OrderWise enables an automated pre-ordering system, based on the specified minimum and maximum quantities of any given raw material or component, so the team can stay ahead of demand.

"As I can see what is being picked more frequently, I can move those items to a location that's closer to the picking areas, so it saves time instead of walking so far. It's quicker to pick and, allocating tasks more efficiently, you can actually avoid people crossing each other too."

Clement Garcia, Despatch Manager

For the despatch process, OrderWise integrations enable order data to be transferred quickly to courier systems, removing any slow rekeying for the team.

"Now we integrate with our Couriers through OrderWise, it's so much simpler. Whereas before, we would manually have to go through the DHL website, and it would take up to a minute to complete each order. Now, with OrderWise integration, it takes seconds."

Modestas Simkus, Warehouse Supervisor

Customer Service and CRM

Connecting operations from end-to-end, Leon Paul has achieved greater efficiency from initial order to despatch, and can now make the most of data in real-time to ensure their customer service levels match the quality of their product offering.

"Although we aren't the cheapest by a long shot, we're now much more efficient, which means people are quite happy to pay our prices – and it's because our service now is recognised as the best."

James Fay, Commercial Director

Linking with every part of the business, the OrderWise CRM system provides complete pipeline management from one central hub with live data quickly to hand for every customer interaction.

"With real-time information from the software, if a customer wants to know their order status, it's so easy to find the order progress in OrderWise. We can instantly look at orders requiring picking or those already in picking and know whether it's about to go out the door - it's just so easy to know exactly what's going on."

James Honeybone, Sales Accounts Manager

Moreover, the team can configure notifications to appear on screen during a certain point mid-sale, with reminders or information that help them to nurture growth and loyalty in their customer base, boosting sales with full view of upselling and cross-selling opportunities.

"The CRM manages things for you, giving you notifications that just pop up on the screen. You can really dive in there and get rid of some of the manual tasks to keep track of orders, and remembering where different things are with different customers and what they expect of you."

James Honeybone, Sales Accounts Manager

Sales activity visibility – in the UK and abroad

To manage sales in the UK and across every continent in the world, OrderWise Sales enables sales activity to be visible in real-time, with live stock availability and order progress eliminating delays and over and under-selling.

Importantly, OrderWise Returns allows the team to collect data to understand why returns are being placed, allowing the Leon Paul team to focus their output even more around the end-user of their fencing products.

"From a sales perspective, everything is live, we can see it all. We know what our true sales are on a day-to-day basis, and we can make the relevant decisions that are required to react accordingly."

James Fay, Commercial Director

With Leon Paul's global agents connected to the OrderWise system too, the business can ensure order and data is accurate, no matter the language or location, removing any errors and delays.

> *"The way agents can place orders and we can ship them from our warehouse here in the UK just keeps the whole operation so fluid, clean and concise."*
>
> **James Honeybone, Sales Accounts Manager**

> *"Having agents and operations in different countries has been a key driver for the business. From an OrderWise point of view, what's been great is that the agents can fully see stock levels, they can see when goods are coming in."*
>
> **Alex Paul, Managing Director**

KPIs and Reporting

Using OrderWise KPIs and Reporting software, Leon Paul can monitor performance across the team, product lines, processes and profits, to ensure the business can stay as efficient and profitable as possible, while always maintaining the best quality management.

Drawing important insights from their data, the Leon Paul team can inform their decision making for the future too, helping to predict seasonal peaks and popular products, as well as to navigate and effectively respond to any business pressures ahead of time.

> *"All the visuals and dashboards are fantastic - it's clearer and clean-cut and it's so easy, just two clicks, hit sales reports, sales dashboard and you're in. The one I use most is the weekly sales day-by-day just to see how we're doing, how we're doing so far that day, compare it to how we are on the same day last year, it's so so easy and it's lovely to just have it there in a really clean, visual way."*
>
> **James Honeybone, Sales Accounts Manager**

What's next for Leon Paul?

With their operations reaching whole new levels of efficiency and automation, Leon Paul is looking forward to continuing their partnership with OrderWise.

Having recently upgraded their OrderWise integration for Magento 1 to Magento 2, the next steps for Leon Paul's digital transformation will now look to replace their Sage 50 account software with OrderWise accounts. For the future, the business is now considering running even more parts of their manufacturing processes through OrderWise too.

"Having seen the success and impact on the business, we absolutely see OrderWise as part of the business growth in the future. Across every region, since we've had OrderWise we've had growth, the software has fitted into, with a bit of adaption, all the key areas of the business. At the moment we're looking at the accounts package and also potentially expanding the use of the manufacturing module."

Alex Paul, Managing Director
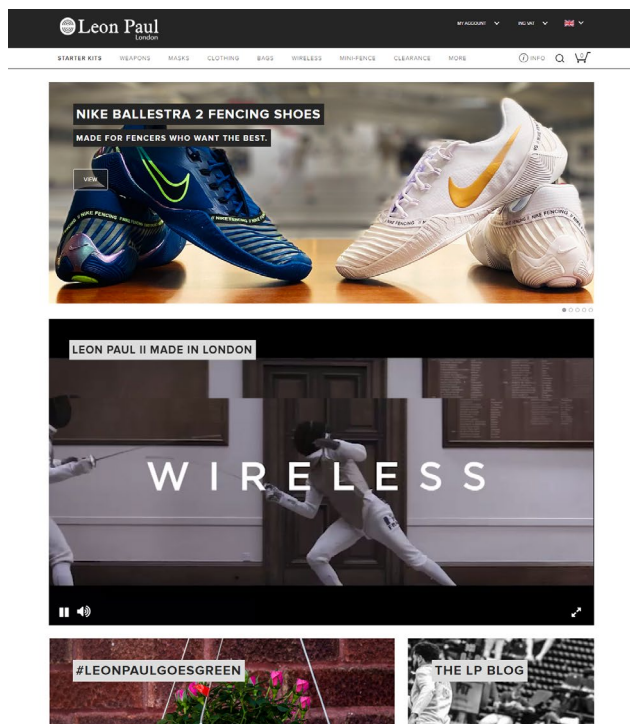
Plus, in the next year, to help avoid some of the Brexit regulation induced delays, Leon Paul is planning to create three new regionalised warehouse locations all managed and connected with OrderWise. This will offer even better visibility on what the business can deliver and ensure their customers continue to receive exceptional service.

"We're just starting to tap into the markets in Asia and the Far East - and so in terms of growth, that's a big opportunity for the business moving forward. Otherwise, we'll continue to invest and we've just invested in a new forge facility which is producing some of the best blades that we've ever produced and the best blades that are available in the world. So, I think there's lots of opportunity for us to continue successful growing and who knows, maybe a fifth generation."

Alex Paul, Managing Director

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ORDERWISE®

With over 30 years' experience helping manufacturers across many industries, OrderWise is proud to be a trusted, award-winning software provider for UK businesses. Offering a wide range of scalable, end-to-end solutions, we ensure our software shapes to your needs. For more information about the best software fit for your business, you can get in touch with our friendly team today.