



Founded in 1937, Kirsh Foundry Incorporated is a family-owned and family-managed manufacturer of high-quality, engineered iron castings. Kirsh proudly serves world-class manufacturers, including Caterpillar, John Deere and Ingersoll-Rand. A B&L Information Systems customer for 18 years, Kirsh moved away from their BLIS ERP system to the more technologically advanced Odyssey ERP solution to automate more of their operations, provide employees and managers with greater access to real-time information, and realize the efficiency and productivity gains from further decreasing their dependence on paper. Based on the Progress® OpenEdge® platform, B&L's Odyssey software unites all areas of Kirsh's operations, including production, quality, management, accounting and sales. By automating more of its manufacturing processes, Kirsh has optimized operations and boosted employee productivity. Managers and employees now have access to real-time information, allowing them to make better decisions, faster. And Odyssey has helped Kirsh to optimize quality control and reduce its internal scrap rates by 40%.

## KIRSH FOUNDRY DRIVES GREATER PRODUCTIVITY AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY WITH THE ODYSSEY ERP SOLUTION

Imagine starting a business that would be thriving 75+ years from now. What would it take to achieve such long-term success? For Kirsh Foundry, the answer has been an unwavering dedication to reinvesting in the future.

Kirsh Foundry is a family-owned and managed manufacturer of high-quality, engineered iron castings, ranging in size from ounces to 60 pounds and in runs from short to production volume. The company serves world-class manufacturers, including Caterpillar, Ingersoll-Rand, John Deere and CNH Global. Founded in 1937, Kirsh Foundry is now run by Jim Jr. and Steve Kirsh, grandsons of the company's original founder.

Since the company's founding, Kirsh has vigorously pursued continuous improvements in quality and efficiency to provide the best possible castings while controlling costs. No matter how well something is done, the company's culture dictates that there are always improvements to be made. Kirsh is poised for meeting the challenges of the future, investing \$6 million dollars over the last 10 years on improvements and expansions.

One of those investments came in 2012 when Kirsh, a B&L customer for 18 years, chose to move away from their legacy system to the Odyssey ERP solution, based on the Progress OpenEdge platform. Kirsh's primary objectives for moving to Odyssey were to realize the efficiency and productivity gains from automating more of their operations and providing employees and managers with greater access to real-time information, while further decreasing their dependence on paper.



### CHALLENGE

*Kirsh wanted to increase efficiency and productivity, enable access to real-time information, and further decrease its dependence on paper.*

### SOLUTION

*Kirsh upgraded to the Odyssey ERP system, based on Progress OpenEdge, from B&L Information Systems to unite all areas of its business.*

### BENEFIT

*By automating more of its manufacturing processes and reducing its reliance on paper, Kirsh has further optimized operations and boosted employee productivity. Managers and employees now have access to real-time information, allowing them to make better decisions, faster. And Odyssey has helped Kirsh to improve quality control and reduce internal scrap rate by 40%.*



"We operate on an aggressive scale, producing 7,000-8,000 different castings each year—each with a large number of individual operations that need to be tracked, and we add 200-300 new patterns each year. So repeatability is absolutely essential to our business," explains Kevin Paul, Vice President of Operations and Human Resources. "Our goal with Odyssey was to implement new features and functionality—like the ability to deliver customized, user-friendly information to the shop floor in real-time, in order to ensure process repeatability, reduce costs, maximize productivity and further optimize our operations."

The Odyssey ERP system enables metalcasting operations to collect, manage and analyze crucial business information needed to track specific costs and boost profits. More than generic accounting or manufacturing software, Odyssey meets the special needs of foundries, die casters, investment casters, machine shops and related operations, as well as the needs of every role within a metalcasting company's operation.

## MAKING "BETTER DECISIONS, FASTER" WHILE REDUCING COSTS

"Our state-of-the-art Progress OpenEdge-based Odyssey software system is an important key to our entire operation," explains Jim Kirsh, Chairman of Kirsh Foundry. "Odyssey was designed to address the particular needs of metalcasters, and unites all areas of our company: production, quality, management, accounting and sales, allowing us to make better decisions, faster."

With the combination of Odyssey and Progress OpenEdge, it is now easier for Kirsh to control processes, implement repeatability and drive efficiency. "In the past, we would come up with some great ideas as to how we could improve a process. But we had no method in place that allowed us to document or communicate that process in a way that made it repeatable and consistent," explains Paul. With Odyssey, Kirsh can now visually communicate with the shop floor staff via videos and images versus just an email, shop card or conversation. This visual form of communication is far easier for people to interpret; it is a faster form of communication; and it reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings and subsequent errors.

"With Odyssey the product standards are now in place, documented, easy-to-read and easy-to-follow. This is particularly important for new employees. By optimizing our ability to communicate, we have streamlined our processes, ensured repeatability across our operations, increased our efficiency and productivity levels, reduced the potential for errors, and consequently we have reduced our internal scrap rate by 40%," says Paul. These capabilities have also enabled Kirsh to reduce costs and become more competitive in the marketplace.

Using Odyssey's Shop Floor Manager module, Kirsh has been able to drive continuous improvement by significantly reducing the amount of manual data entry and paperwork previously associated with daily processes like work orders, instructions and recording production numbers. Today, Odyssey captures that information automatically in real time. Employees and managers can access relevant information they need to do their jobs via monitors in a timely fashion. The screens can easily be customized per employee, workstation or department by Kirsh's managers.

"I am especially excited about Odyssey's Shop Floor Manager with the Quality Viewer feature," explains Paul. "It is so flexible that I can customize the screens for different operations, depending on their needs. Rather than giving employees a hard copy card with an image, I can now design the screens to include videos, pictures or graphics, which are far easier and faster for employees to digest. And because I can update the information in real time, the data on the shop floor is always accurate and up-to-date. This has truly enabled us to optimize information delivery, reduce the potential for errors and maximize our operations."

"Using Odyssey, we have integrated every role in our manufacturing process in to one system, allowing us to make better decisions, faster," says Kirsh. "We communicate information such

**"Implementing our Progress OpenEdge-based Odyssey system has absolutely been worth the investment."**

Kevin Paul  
Vice President of Operations and  
Human Resources  
Kirsh Foundry

as production schedules and individual product requirements directly to our production staff. Real-time production data is communicated directly from the shop floor to supervisors and managers. The data is easy to access by anyone at any time, helping us to keep costs down and efficiencies up.”

Odyssey has also enabled Kirsh to ensure better quality control and, in turn, reduce its costs. Paul explains: “With Odyssey’s real-time parts tracking, we have complete traceability over every casting in our operation, from the melting of the iron through the shipping of the casting. Odyssey gives us the ability to pinpoint problems and reduce scrap while keeping production flowing smoothly. With our Progress OpenEdge-based Odyssey system, we ensure quality at every step of the manufacturing process.”

For example, if a shop floor employee has a problem with a casting, he or she can immediately send an e-mail notifying the shop floor manager of the problem. Issues can be dealt with as they arise versus managers finding out about them just before shipping.

“The amazing thing about Odyssey is that there are just so many features we can utilize to improve our business. To me the sky is pretty much the limit now,” says Paul. For example, Kirsh is now able to focus not only on maintenance management, but also on predictive maintenance management. Based on parameters Kirsh inputs into the system, Odyssey can predict when a machine will need maintenance or a new part. And the system can automatically create a work order or requisition for a part order. “This predictive analysis capability means the uptime on our machinery is improved dramatically. That is a benefit that cascades across our operations, affecting productivity and efficiency levels, scrap rates, and costs.”

Paul continues: “Odyssey empowers us to take advantage of new technologies and opportunities. For example, we just purchased tablets for our maintenance staff. In the near future they will be able to physically move around the facility, immediately access the information they need while on the floor, and even issue requisitions for new parts. It is this kind of capability that is getting us to that next % increase in uptime or productivity or % reduction in scrap. We believe that our ability to focus on those smaller but critical details is delivering greater improvements and increasing our competitive edge.”

Paul and his team were responsible for implementing Odyssey as well as designing all of the shop floor screens. Despite not having a programming background, the team was able to quickly and easily roll the ERP system into production. Additionally, because Odyssey, backed by the Progress OpenEdge platform, has proven to be very low maintenance and reliable, Kirsh has not had to employ a dedicated database administrator. “Implementing our Progress OpenEdge-based Odyssey system has absolutely been worth the investment. There is no doubt in my mind that I now have more capabilities and features I can leverage to enhance our operations.”

## CONTINUED SUCCESS WITH B&L

When it came time to move away from their legacy application, Kirsh never considered working with another vendor. “We have had an excellent relationship with B&L since the early 90’s. They have always been committed to our success, and they have really helped us to improve our operations and become more competitive,” says Paul. “Like us, they are a family-owned company that truly wants to improve its customers’ operations. I don’t think there are any other software vendors that can do what B&L does for foundries and diecasters. They really are the best product out there in our eyes.”

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Jim Kirsh  
Chairman  
Kirsh Foundry

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## ABOUT KIRSH FOUNDRY INCORPORATED

Kirsh Foundry is a manufacturer of high quality, engineered iron castings ranging from ounces to 60 pounds in short to production volumes, serving a diverse customer base. The company boasts a proud and skilled work force. Kirsh is committed to producing castings that always meet customer specifications and delivery requirements through the use of state-of-the-art equipment, technology and education. [www.kirshfoundry.com](http://www.kirshfoundry.com)

## ABOUT B&L INFORMATION SYSTEMS



For over 35 years, B&L Information Systems has been a global leader in providing integrated enterprise resource planning [ERP] for metalcasters. Whether client server application or Software as a Service [SaaS], B&L's ERP is designed to enable metalcasters to drive increased efficiencies and improve profitability. [www.blinfo.com](http://www.blinfo.com)

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## PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation [NASDAQ: PRGS] is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

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