

How Marshall Canada set firm foundations for growth

Marshall Canada worked with Kerv Consult to successfully implement an ERP solution which could support their core operations, help them streamline ways of working and also enable their strong growth ambitions.

Please note: Kerv Consult was recently rebranded from Monochrome Consultancy when it joined the Kerv Group. This project was delivered at a point when the team was known as Monochrome Consultancy.

Customer Overview

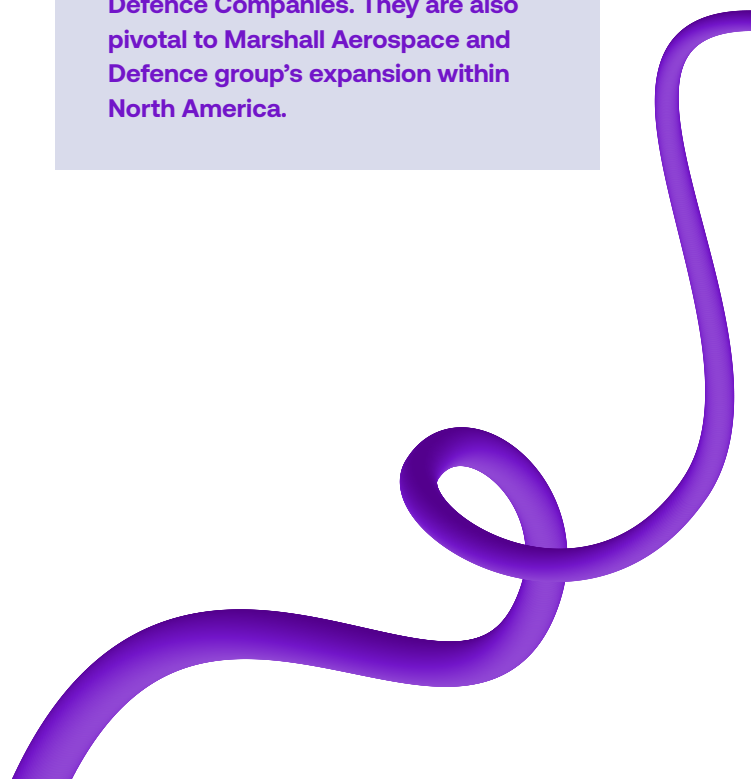
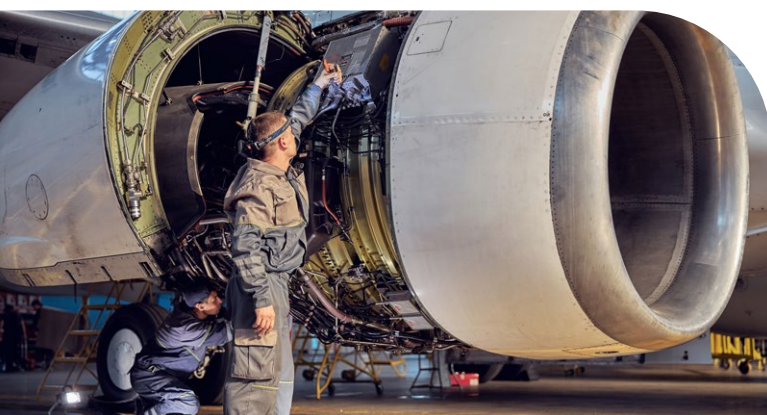
Marshall Canada provides military and commercial customers with a range of world-leading applied engineering services and product solutions across Canada and beyond.

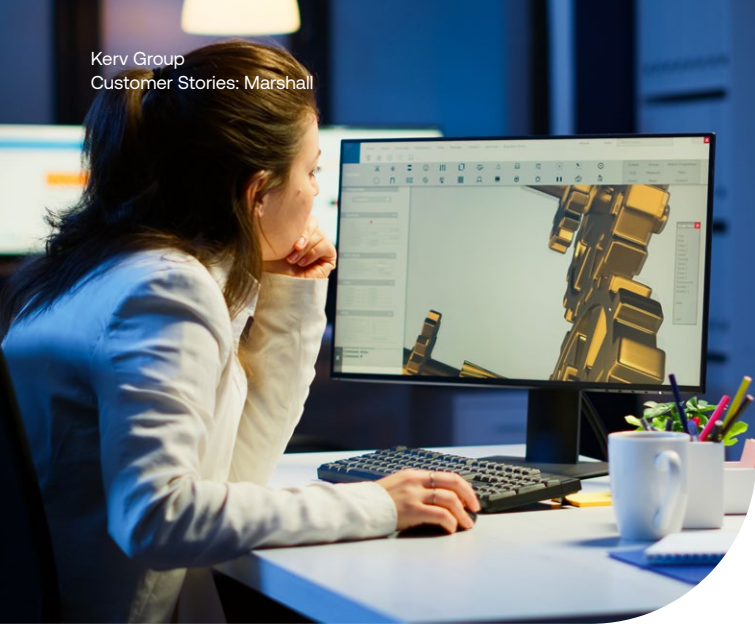
They are ranked in the Canadian Defence Review's (CDR) 2021 Top 100 Defence Companies. They are also pivotal to Marshall Aerospace and Defence group's expansion within North America.



The Challenge

Marshall Canada needed to implement a new ERP solution to standardise ways of working and to prepare themselves for future growth. Kerv Consult was chosen to take on this challenge, and successfully lead a project to implement an ERP solution within 4.5 months.





Background and Context

Marshall Canada's parent group, Marshall Aerospace and Defence group (MADG), have been successfully transforming through a programme called Horizon. Horizon have been implementing IFS as the ERP platform which underpins the transformation of the organisation.

Marshall Canada openly embraced the need for the transformation and the MADG's adoption of IFS, recognising the benefits of new ways of working. However due to specific requirements including data sovereignty Marshall Canada needed to implement their own solution within Canada.

To enable this, the Horizon Programme mobilised a separate project team, led by Kerv Consult to deliver this standalone ERP capability for the business. The goal was to align the solutions for both MADG and Marshall Canada as much as possible, whilst also ensuring that the capability delivered would meet the Canada specific requirements.

This was especially timely as Marshall Canada had historically been an Aerospace focussed organisation, providing a range of integrated support and engineering services for aircraft. However, the Land Systems part of the business had been growing and the Marshall Canada have plans for a large new manufacturing facility which required a solid ERP foundation.

This new facility coupled with the requirement to avoid clashes with the delivery plan for the Horizon solution within the MADG UK businesses meant that the project was presented the challenged to deliver a full ERP capability within 5 months. This was a challenge that we readily accepted!

The Solution

The core of the change project was to implement IFS, specifically those capabilities which would allow the Marshall Canada team to achieve two things:

- Embrace new ways of working for the delivery of their current services,
- Ready themselves for the addition of Manufacturing and other capabilities in the future.

Figure 1 - IFS Applications 10 functionality overview



<https://www.ifs.com/ifs-cloud/ifs-cloud-overview>

Our project implemented many of the main IFS Apps 10 capabilities and processes shown above.

Some specific areas of focus were:

- **Finance**

This underpinned all accounting requirements as well as AR, AP, General Ledger, Tax and Financial Reporting

- **Project Management**

This part of the solution covered all projects (both internal and revenue generating customer projects) including the specific project requirements driven by some of the defence contracts with customers.

- **Order to Cash**

This process allowed for sales to be captured and managed through to invoicing. We worked closely with the Marshall Canada team and were able to streamline this process to drive efficiencies at present, whilst also allowing more complex orders in future.

- **Supply Chain and Procurement**

The solution the project delivered underpinned all buying and supplier management for the company.

- **Service & Maintenance**

Developing the capability to maintain assets and fleets to underpin future contracts.

We always advocating learning from experience and one reason that the solution was able to be delivered at pace is that there was an existing referenceable design, with a set of core decisions, which had been developed for MADG.

The team took the approach to base the solution design discussions against this reference and then only deviate where required rather than start from scratch. This allowed for the great work delivered by other parts of the Horizon programme to be re-utilised and this approach certainly helped achieve the timelines that we did.

Change not just Technology

The delivery of the system is only part of a transformation project. From the start there was a clear focus on business change within the project to ensure that Marshall Canada could get the value from the investment.

The business change workstream within the project focussed on clear comms, a comprehensive training plan and strong engagement through the development of a change champion network aligned to the major process areas. The importance of change was recognised and this activity was supported by a great people across both Marshall Canada and the wider Horizon programme.

The change champions/process owners were invited to regular engagement sessions that we held to ensure alignment throughout the project. This was critical to ensure alignment and readiness given the short timescales.

This was delivered on top of a robust technical solution which was integrated with other systems. There was an element of IFS functionality not deployed as it was not needed at this point in time, such as manufacturing. However, the project team ensured that it was readied and could be deployed in future without conflicting with the current solution.



Delivery

We ran an aggressive delivery plan where we launched 4.5 months after starting. We knew we had condensed timescales compared to a traditional ERP implementation and so we started with a clear scoping workshop to provide a backbone to deliver against.

We knew this needed to be validated and so the team quickly stood up a development instance of the system to allow people to see it in action. We then held a range of solution workshops to refine the scope and validate the solution, by walking through the in-scope processes within IFS and agreeing any changes or requirements.

In parallel, we kicked off the data workstream which is always critical in a project like this. By mobilising this very early, we were able to prove the process to load data several times before the final cutover and also support the relevant owners of the data to iteratively improve on the data loads provided.

These informed the changes such as configurations that were needed and so the technical team were able to deliver the necessary configuration and technical elements. These were fed into the UAT process which covered the in-scope processes and any configured elements.

In parallel, we built two more environments, one for testing and one which was Production. We prioritised the changes to processes based on the number of users and this approach coupled with our condensed delivery cycle allowed us to start training and familiarisation relatively early. This meant we could provide robust training over approximately 8 weeks rather than rushing it.

ERP launches are aligned to financial periods so that the data migrated is a clean cut at a point in time. Given how important timescales were, we did attempt to launch the system after 3.5 months and whilst there was appetite, the steering board decided that a better option was to spend one more period doing further validation of some of the processes which were customer facing and also action a number of items highlighted around the time the decision was being considered.

We launched successfully at the start of August and given the scale of the change we had very little noise or negative business impact. All early life support was managed through the service desk and the small number of tickets raised were standard go-live items such as small tweaks to permissions and password resets rather than anything major.

Results

The results are best articulated by our customer:

“ With Dan and Kerv Consult (previously Monochrome)’s support we have managed to deliver a full ERP deployment to Canada in 4.5 months with only very few and insignificant post live issues. This was done in a fully remote mode, during the pandemic with a time difference of 8 hours.

Dan and the team worked tirelessly and this has ensured another key element of the strategic Horizon Programme has been completed.”

Alan Ashton

Horizon Programme Director

This success was testament to the great work done by the entire project team which we are delighted to have had the opportunity to lead.



Benefits

There were a range of benefits from this project:

Marshall Canada and Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group companies are now using the same ERP platform which further improves the ease of collaboration across the group.

Marshall Canada have been able to implement industry best practice processes with enough time to ensure they are fully adopted before the business significantly scales up to deliver their new land services.

Marshall Canada now has a strong core ERP platform that they can layer Manufacturing onto as their facility comes on line in the future. This ensures the business processes remain fully integrated.

There were a range of efficiencies through the new solution and many manual processes were able to be retired. The intention is to build upon the foundation with further efficiencies.



“ Dan’s personal leadership and extraordinary efforts helped deliver a complex ERP solution despite the challenges of being fully-remote and across 8 time zones.

Using a highly-collaborative and data-driven approach, the team from Kerv Consult (previously Monochrome) maintained a high degree of stakeholder participation and buy-in throughout a compressed test and development schedule of less than five months.

Thanks to the comprehensive and transparent reporting style, I always had a clear view of the project’s status and full confidence in Kerv Consult’s commitment to deliver successfully.”

Sam Michaud

Managing Director, Marshall Canada



Collaboration

Kerv Consult may have led the project but we were fortunate enough to work with a great team. The Marshall Canada leadership was strong, with clear decision making when needed. The Horizon Programme team demonstrated expert knowledge of IFS and provided great support throughout and local IFS consultants we engaged in Canada, Hoist Global Tech Solutions, also stepped up to the challenge.

We were fortunate to work with such a strong delivery team and would readily do so again!

Future

Marshall Canada are now well positioned to grow their Land business and develop their manufacturing facility. They have a world class ERP system to underpin their growth and a talented workforce to leverage it.

The relationship between us at Kerv Consult and Marshall is also excellent and conversations have already begun about how we can support Marshall with other projects and change.



Final Word

We look forward to working together into the future with such a fantastic organisation.

Get in touch with us

For general enquiries please contact
hello@kerv.com

Kerv Group, Unit 1B, 1 Finsbury Avenue, London EC2M 2PP