

Digital Breakthrough Case Study

Ecoffins

ecoffins.co.uk

Funeral products

Ecoffins is a family business enabling eco-friendly funerals using its coffins and urns made from bio-degradable materials such as bamboo, willow and cardboard. The design and operation of its premises in rural Kent demonstrate commitment to sustainability. Ecoffins is the only UK coffin-maker with Fair Trade certification, recognising its equitable trading with suppliers in China and Indonesia.

MD William Wainman and his team want to continue to be the UK's best and most sustainable maker of coffins whilst increasing sales above their current two percent market share. They are highly innovative in their pursuit of ever more sustainable operations and products, and want to improve still further through data-driven customer service and supply chain management.

Digital Breakthrough helped Ecoffins to investigate the potential of modern data management technologies and integrated equipment to increase their competitiveness and deal with increasing demand for new products.

Digital Breakthrough Operational Outcomes include

Ecoffins has now completed its ERP system integration with Prospect Soft CRM and Xero accounting software, and has purchased a 3D printing machine. Research has been initiated on the feasibility of using tablets, RFID tracking and CAD/CAM integration. Later digital innovations in the Ecoffins roadmap include a customer ordering portal with AR and VR features, supplier access to ERP data, AI-enhanced forecasting and automated spray painting. Ecoffins continues to be supported by the Innovate UK EDGE/ Enterprise Europe Network team at the University of Greenwich.

Digital Breakthrough Business Impacts include

Implementation of Ecoffin's ERP system has unleashed improvements in stock monitoring and ordering. Their new 3D printing capability has helped Ecoffins to solve a customer challenge by making a tool for tightening wooden screws for coffin handles, saving time for funeral directors. Ecoffins is now testing its new customer portal, giving quick access to stock levels and prices and allowing customers to upload pictures of artwork. Ecoffins has recently received the rare accolade of an Investors in People Platinum Award, and its sales have risen by ten percent during 2020. Both achievements are attributed by the company to its investment in improving ways of working in the office and factory and with suppliers and customers, with increasingly strong support from data and digital technologies.

"The Digital Breakthrough experience went above and beyond our expectations. We found the whole experience very helpful and useful".

Paul Young
HR Manager Ecoffins

