

## Performance Made Unified High-Tech Electronics Supplier Expands Global Footprint and Integrates Acquisitions with QAD

### The Company: Fast-Growing Global Enterprise

A business unit of the Laird Group PLC, Laird Technologies (Laird) is the world's leading designer and manufacturer of antenna, electromagnetic interference (EMI), telematics and thermal management solutions for the telecommunications, data-communications, computer, general electronics, network equipment, aerospace, defense, automotive and medical equipment industries.

Headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, the company has manufacturing plants and technical support operations in the United States, Mexico, China, France, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Japan, United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea and Taiwan.

### The Challenge: Rapid Global Expansion through Acquisition

Laird was formed in a merger of several leading EMI shielding, thermal management and wireless antenna manufacturers, and continues to grow through acquisition. Since 2004, the company has been executing an ambitious global growth strategy—the company recently completed six acquisitions in a seven-month period.

***“Our goal as a global company is to manage as a single global enterprise, not 20 separate companies.”***

—Todd Rumsey, Chief Information Officer, Laird Technologies

“We are challenged with the convergence of approximately 20 independent companies coming together to form a global enterprise” says Todd Rumsey, Chief

Information Officer at Laird. “Our goal is to manage as a single global enterprise, not as a loose collection of independent businesses.” he adds.

In 2004 the company began the search for a single ERP platform to unite its acquired companies with common technology and business processes. “As we looked across the variety of ERP platforms that our acquired businesses were using, we did not find an ERP vendor with a global footprint comparable to QAD,” says Rumsey.

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### The Solution: Laird Unifies Its Enterprise with QAD

Laird especially appreciated the ability of both QAD enterprise applications and QAD Global Services to address the company's needs in every country where it has manufacturing facilities.

During the evaluation phase, the Laird team worked with QAD Consulting and QAD Sales, focusing on the company's objectives, vision and requirement for both a global solution and a global partner. The Laird evaluation team visited 12 QAD reference sites in Europe, China and the United States, reviewing their internal processes, products, markets, customer bases and customer requirements.

“We really focused heavily in China—a majority of Laird's manufacturing footprint is in that area of the world. We challenged QAD to give us two or three references in the regions where our plants are. Then we went with QAD to

visit those customers and hear straight from them their experiences with the QAD platform and the QAD support resources within that region,” says Rumsey.

Laird’s first site went live in March of 2006. Over the next nine months, Laird rolled out QAD to a total of ten sites in nine countries; the company will implement QAD in another 11 sites in 2007. In addition to QAD Global

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Services, Laird is working with a variety of implementation partners around the world. As the rollout proceeds, QAD is replacing the other legacy ERP systems and becoming Laird’s corporate standard for its manufacturing operations.

#### **The Benefits: The Clarity of A Single View with the Agility of Global Processes**

“What we’ve found with QAD is a platform that is structured enough to enable common process and globalization, yet flexible enough that we are being able to apply it very quickly across multiple product lines, in multiple languages, countries and currencies,” says Rumsey.

QAD is enabling a single view of data across Laird’s enterprise, making it possible for the company to standardize business processes across their sites. “We’re using QAD to establish a global data model and enable global business processes. And now we’re seeing the benefit of those global processes across our sites,” says Rumsey.

Recently, a situation arose that tested and proved the system. “One of our operations in Europe was facing a very serious supply chain issue which threatened our production schedule due to lack of availability of a critical component from a vendor in Europe, “ says Rumsey. “Everything that vendor was able to build was being shipped to a Laird factory in Mexico. We had just minutes to make a decision to divert material, because it was literally being boarded onto a container and was almost on its way off the dock.”

The European operations director was able to easily access production information at the plant in Mexico, quickly perform a what-if analysis and determine that he could divert two or three days of that material to Hungary without affecting the production flow of the plant in Mexico. That visibility to materials availability and production schedules at a plant across the globe averted the need to purchase extra material and the expense of having it expedited, or worse yet, air freighting the material shipped to Mexico back to Europe. Rumsey comments that a situation which could have resulted in late-night emails and phone calls was resolved quickly and calmly.

“In terms of benefits to the company, are we getting what we perceived we would get? Absolutely. Collaboration within and between the sites that we have

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implemented has increased quite a bit. Plants that did not have similar business processes or common nomenclature for products, customers or vendors now have that. We’re seeing business functions working together

more closely because of that common nomenclature, because they're all comparing common system functionality and common system appearance."

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Collaboration is resulting in best-of-breed solutions to common challenges. For example, with QAD, finance managers at different sites in different countries can easily engage to compare how they do things like cycle count programs or variance analysis.

“By implementing QAD, we’re enabling cultural integration. We’re not just integrating ERP in a stand-alone mindset; we’re creating global processes and a global footprint. And that begins to have a much bigger effect on your whole culture than just implementing ERP per se. You start a whole process of working together as one global culture, and not as individual companies,” says Rumsey. “That’s the vision that Laird had even before we decided to go with QAD: that an ERP implementation would force us to take on these challenges, and it has.”

The company has just begun to measure ROI benefits, and Rumsey is confident that the results will justify

## Highlights

### Company

<b>Company Name</b>	Laird Technologies
<b>Industry</b>	Electronics
<b>Products</b>	Designs and manufactures electromagnetic interference (emi shielding) materials, thermal interface products, and wireless antenna solutions for the telecommunications, data-communications, computer, general electronics, network equipment, aerospace, defense, automotive and medical equipment industries.

### Solutions

<b>QAD Solutions</b>	QAD MFG/PRO eB2; QAD Release Management
<b>Hardware</b>	HP Europe in; Dell in North America
<b>Environment</b>	Red Hat Linux; Progress 9.1E
<b>Sites running QAD</b>	Ten at time of publication, additional sites in process and planned
<b>Languages</b>	English, Chinese, Czech, German
<b>Time-to Benefit</b>	Immediate

### Results

- Successfully implemented QAD at 10 sites in nine months
- Leveraged QAD roll-out to create a unified culture across the enterprise
- Supported collaborative, ‘best-of-breed solutions to common problems’ across the global enterprise
- Established global data model
- Enabled common business processes throughout all sites
- Unified a diverse, dispersed enterprise with one corporate culture
- Improved visibility to inventory and other data throughout the enterprise

his expectations. "In our original request for capital we made our ROI assumptions based on QAD customer benchmarks for results such as overall inventory

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reduction, improvement in inventory turns and overall reduction in customer delivery lead times. We applied the benchmark results to our statistics and then made the assumption that we would get similar results. Based on those assumptions, our capital investment would pay off very quickly," he says.

### **The Future: Driving the Vision**

"We've reached a point where we absolutely understand our decision to go with QAD has been legitimized: ten sites up and running in nine countries has proven that QAD is capable across all the major regions we operate in," says Rumsey.

Over the course of 2007, Laird plans to implement QAD in another 11 sites. Rumsey comments that the vision is gaining momentum throughout the company: "We've proven that Laird has assembled a team and put a process in place that's legitimate in terms of implementation. With a critical mass of site implementations under our belt; the rest of the company is lining up. Our other sites and regions are enthusiastically on board."

***"In terms of benefits to the company, are we getting what we perceived we would get? Absolutely."***

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