



Frequently Asked Questions ...

What can Caliach do for our business?

Accelerate your drive towards increased competitiveness and profitability. By replacing judgements with analysis, supported by accurate and timely information, greater customer satisfaction and improvements to the bottom line can be realised. These can result from productivity improvements, better inventory management, increased delivery reliability, lower supply chain costs, improving quality and tighter financial control.

What sort of manufacturing business can benefit from Caliach Vision?

Most small to mid-size manufacturing sites can benefit (current sites are typically between 10 and 100 employees, with a turnover between £1m and £10m). Businesses providing products or processes where material procurement, value-adding processes and the management of customer orders are involved can usually be accommodated. However, the benefits are likely to be greatest where growth or product range complexity is currently diverting administrative resources away from customer fulfilment and product management, where problems exist balancing supply and demand, or just where achieving greater production control and cost control are paramount.

Why is Caliach Vision billed as the smaller manufacturer's solution?

Ease of use and flexibility makes it particularly easy to implement and manage, despite it being a highly functional professional business system. Inventory and production control are supplemented by comprehensive financials, marketing contact management, quality management features and more - all integrated into one simple business-wide package.

The user interface has been designed to be friendly to staff who are not computer experts. Navigating between functions is particularly easy. You could be simultaneously working on a customer enquiry, a work schedule task and a supplier account review – simply clicking between open windows and tasks as required. Fast and extensive drill-down, along with drag-and-drop data entry, further enhances the user experience and increases productivity.

Two types of context-sensitive on-screen help are available. Automatic tooltips give information for window objects, toolbar items and menu commands, while comprehensive HTML help pages give detailed operation instructions, also on a window, toolbar and menu basis. A fully illustrated 1700+ page Reference Book is also provided electronically, with easy navigation based on menu commands and windows. As the program is enhanced under the terms of the support package, the latest version of the help is also updated on the Caliach support website.

These features all contribute to a lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) through reduced training and support requirements and less non-productive time, compared to systems originally intended for larger organisations. No special hardware or expensive additional software is required - a good PC network and file server, as found in most small businesses today, is sufficient. This also means that specialist IT support is not required to implement and manage the system.

Are there limitations to the size of network that Caliach Vision can cater for?

Caliach Vision is currently successfully deployed in environments supporting 1 - 40 concurrent users; with an average user count around 10. However, the number of workstations on a network that can have the program installed for access is effectively unlimited. For sites that anticipate more than 50 concurrent users within 3 years, particularly where high transaction rates are involved, we regretfully recommend considering a much more expensive mid-range client-server based solution!

Can Caliach Vision cope with multiple manufacturing sites?

If they operate as independent plants, the best solution is to run two independent Caliach Vision databases with separate licences. If they are under one business roof, as it were, but manufacture separate products, then a single site licence (perhaps with multiple databases and multiple licensed company names) will handle your needs. Caliach Vision is not a true multi-manufacturing site database, but it can operate very effectively under many circumstances, with group financial data export and consolidation functions supplied as standard.

Why does Caliach Vision not use client-server technology?

The network size and typical transaction rates of the Caliach Vision target market do not justify the increased hardware, software, maintenance and support costs. Client-server systems are much more demanding of IT expertise, even on a routine basis, due to the three distinct technologies (client, server and communications) that all have to be understood, and managed separately.

Caliach Vision uses a single Rapid Application Development (RAD) program which handles all client, server and communications activities in one seamless process. This means there is a close and transparent alignment of program and database that allows upgrade, customisation and maintenance all to be carried out within the program itself. This means that a much higher proportion of your total investment is allocated to functions and business improvement.

What sort of hardware is needed to run Caliach Vision?

The system can be deployed on the desktop in single or cross-platform environments encompassing Microsoft Windows (2000, XP, 2003), Apple Macintosh (OSX), and Linux on Intel. At least 512Mb memory, 150Mb of free disk space, and on Intel a 1GHz Pentium class processor are required (recommended 512Mb memory, 250Mb disk space and 1GHz Pentium IV processor).

Typical network file server environments include Microsoft peer-to-peer, Microsoft NT/2000/2003, Novell Netware, MacOS9 and OSX servers, and Linux servers.

How long has Caliach been around?

Caliach systems have been in use since 1990. Caliach Vision, the latest product, was first released in 2001.

Is it true that any system we buy must fit our existing processes exactly?

This was one the biggest causes of failed implementations in the early days of ERP, where a system failed to work smoothly and return the promised benefits because it was being asked to operate outside the design envelope. The first thing to ensure is that Caliach Vision has a business function model that is broadly compatible with your own – this can be demonstrated by presentations using your data, along with reference to successful sites in similar markets and/or with similar processes if necessary. Once the system is chosen, it is configured for you, while your processes are re-engineered to achieve the best possible result. This is achieved by process modelling and testing activities.

What is involved in implementing Caliach Vision?

A broad consensus within the business that a system is needed, with a firm commitment from senior management, are both important for a smooth implementation. Once you have mapped out your business processes and selected Caliach Vision as a good fit, the system will be installed and a project started to manage the transition. There are many different implementation methods, ranging from a slow incremental rollout to an all-in-one-go "big-bang approach" – we can help you choose a pace to suit you.

Legacy information (electronic or paper-based) will be reviewed, and the preparation and transfer of this data into the new system planned. You may need to devise an appropriate part numbering system if you don't already have one – we can advise on this. As early as possible in the project you will begin importing or entering representative data and trying it out (process modelling and testing). When you have a new business process model that you are happy with, training is completed and the final import or entry of your live transactional data planned and carried out.

The project team typically carries out most of these activities, with the assistance of consultants working for Caliach Ltd or one of our partners. The amount of assistance you choose to have will depend on your available resources and experience. Some sites have implemented with no help beyond standard support desk advice; in other cases anything from 1 - 20 external consultancy days have been supplied to bring the project to the go-live point.

How long will implementation take?

The total time for the implementation is of course dependent on available resources and the complexity of your business, but typical project duration can range from a few days for a simple operation, to 6 months in a complicated organisation with minimal spare resources. In the case of the incremental rollout method, useful business efficiencies and information can be realised in days.

How much data will the system need to function?

The only data you must have to begin transaction processing are basic customer and supplier records – although the addition of part numbers for sales and purchase information will result in much more useful transactional data, and will enable visibility of inventory movements and levels. Other data that you will almost certainly want to either build up over time, or prepare in advance, include parts lists or recipe definitions for your products; your manufacturing resource groups, along with the













manufacturing operation sequences that your products follow on these groups; and detailed purchasing information and customer/supplier relationship management details etc.

All of this data (and more) can be prepared in spreadsheets and imported with simple tools included in the software. If you have an existing system that can export data in a form that a spreadsheet can read, or already have spreadsheets containing the data, then it is usually much faster to transfer data this way – consultants from Caliach Ltd or our partners can advise and help with the re-formatting and import process. Information not available in this form can of course be entered directly into the system through the simple and fast graphical user-interface, while some of the data will even be collected and generated automatically during normal business transaction processing. Powerful global change facilities are also available to set up data according to your requirements.

We have special needs – how can a generic program address them?

Caliach Vision has a wealth of functionality and numerous configurable program options that cater for most situations. As far as possible customer needs should be met from standard functionality, because doing this minimises both customisation costs and delays and ongoing maintenance, and also takes advantage of best practice designed into the system. Custom features can be added, either under a dedicated User menu, through custom traps (hooks), or through plug-in libraries. Custom design and development is expensive and should be avoided as much as possible – this does not mean that you have to rule it out completely however.

Will it pay for itself?

Typically a successful implementation pays for itself within two years. However Caliach Vision, even with all new hardware, can pay for itself within one year! This is because of the initial low cost and ease of implementation and use. Caliach Vision can be operational faster and with less cost than other more traditional systems. Many current users of Caliach Vision can testify to this.

Caliach Vision has an Open Data Structure; what is it and why is it so significant?

You have full access to the entire data structure of the system. Ad-hoc reporting and graphing generators allow flexible, consistent reporting. Open Database Connectivity means that suitable third party reporting and business intelligence tools can also be used to analyse the data.

Using the supplied design version of the database management system, you will be able to use the included open source copies of all standard reports and documents to produce your own customised versions. Any number of new custom reports can also be designed and added to the system. The design version also allows you to add full-blown data processing features of your own, and even write new applications that use or additionally process the data maintained by Caliach Vision – all accessible from the programís standard user-interface if you wish. You can also supplement the help system and change program texts and language to suit your needs.

What support facilities are available?

Telephone, email and fax hotline support is available from qualified and experienced personnel. Comprehensive software and data support facilities are also available to users on the Caliach website, along with a forum for all Caliach Vision users to communicate with one another and Caliach professionals worldwide. Site visits and off-site courses to provide implementation assistance, training and other services are of course offered at competitive rates.

Caliach Vision could be what we are looking for. Can we see it in action before buying?

Yes, simply contact Caliach Ltd or your Caliach representative and they will gladly discuss your requirements. Demonstrations are usually undertaken without obligation, and can include samples of your own data if available. In the latter stages of your evaluation, reference site contacts can be provided if you require them.

Additionally, Caliach Ltd offer a fully-functional version of the program on CD for evaluation purposes, record limited and restricted to one concurrent user. The demonstration can alternatively be downloaded from our web site, and both are backed-up by free, no-obligation evaluation assistance.













Caliach launched its first Windowsbased MRP software in 1990. Our software development team ensures that the software evolves in step with the appropriate technologies and business environments.

The current software, Caliach Vision, is a fully integrated, multi-user ERP system that can help you control your business in its day-to-day operations. The program is a mature application from a trusted company, that is currently used in many diverse industries across the world.

Caliach Vision is ideal for sites from 1 to 40 concurrent users, operating in a wide range of manufacturing modes.

Before release, all our programs and upgrades undergo rigorous testing and are offered for a choice of operating systems including Microsoft Windows, Linux and Macintosh.

Each version of the software is developed throughout its life, with enhancements being offered to existing users in a programme of easy to implement upgrades.

We additionally offer a range of on-site training, product customisation and telephone support services to ease your implementation and maintenance – a complete package for the manufacturing business.



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