MITEK CORPORATION

Open Source PLM Comes Through Loud and Clear at MiTek

> " **Aras has become a workspace for R&D and a productivity enhancer for the entire company.**
>
> Kevin Friske
> Database Administrator,
> MiTek Corporation

MiTek Corporation integrates multiple business units and dramatically improves quality, process, compliance and visibility with Aras enterprise open source PLM solution.

With 13 specialized audio companies sold in over 80 countries, MiTek Corporation is a recognized world leader in the design, manufacture and sale of high performance mobile, residential, marine and commercial audio products. MiTek earned and maintains its competitive edge by providing innovative solutions, constantly adding value to its products, and continually increasing customer satisfaction. Family-owned and operated for more than 35 years, the company prides itself on listening to its customers and delivering high quality products that consistently exceed expectations.

MiTek Corporation

▸ **PLM**: Aras Innovator Solution Suite

▸ **Platform**: Microsoft Windows Server, SQL Server, .NET Framework

▸ **Initiatives**: Product Management, Product Engineering & Quality Planning

▸ **Integration**: ERP System

For several years MiTek operated 3 separate research and development divisions—mechanical, electrical and acoustical—each focused on a different market. The three divisions operated independently, using their own paper-based, ad-hoc systems to track and manage projects. There was little communication among groups and management had no visibility into production, individually or cross-functionally.

The company established a strategic initiative to unify and automate processes cross all three R&D divisions. In doing so, they would gain visibility into the projects and project load of each group and enable management to optimize overall capacity by shifting projects among the groups when workloads were uneven or when one group required the specialization provided by another.

MiTek began evaluating system options to unify their R&D practice. They looked at project and file management systems, but they lacked functional capabilities. They

aras corp®

An Aras Community Case Study

evaluated a complete ERP solution, but it was cost prohibitive. They even considered writing their own system, but quickly realized how large an undertaking it would be to write, maintain and update the system over time. Then they discovered Aras enterprise open source PLM.

But it wasn't love at first sight. "We didn't embrace Aras the first time we looked at it," recalled Kevin Friske, Database Administrator at MiTek. "We expected the typical PLM system and that's not Aras. Aras is different. They don't do things like everyone else and it wasn't until we saw an Aras demo that we realized what a unique and powerful solution it is." Friske is quick to add, "we are so glad we gave it a second look."

Full-Featured PLM That's Easy to Use

MiTek downloaded the full production version of Aras free of charge from aras.com and started working with it. It didn't take long for them to see the potential. "The download was solid and stable," said Friske. "Aras has tremendous programmability and the Microsoft look and feel makes it very easy to use." Friske installed Aras on a live server and pitched it to MiTek senior management. "The President and the COO said it was the way to go. The fact that it is free to download certainly helped, but it was Aras's comprehensive functionality that won us over," said Friske.

Like thousands of Aras users around the world, MiTek is leveraging Aras's enterprise open source PLM solution without the ongoing support of Aras. MiTek attended a 2 day Aras developer training course and has been using, customizing and expanding their rollout of the software for more than 2 years. The company takes full advantage of the many open source solutions, tips and information available on aras.com. "We downloaded all the community modules: Quality, ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library), ECO (Engineering Change Order) Process, etc. We are always checking the site to see what's new and if we like it, we bring it on board," said Friske.

Advancing Quality & Compliance

The Aras Quality Module really took off within the company and according to Friske, it's quickly becoming MiTek's de facto ISO system. As Friske explained, "Aras won high praise at a recent ISO 9000 audit. The auditors were very impressed with Aras's functionality and how well it maintains the structure of the ISO quality standard."

Today, two-thirds of MiTek employees use Aras and the company houses more than 70,000 parts in its Aras database. All R&D engineers across all three major divisions are trained on Aras. They can create their own systems, ISO documents, workflows and lifecycles. Quality Engineers are self-sufficient too and the Materials Planning group is well on their way.

Business Benefits

▸ All-New Level of Visibility & Reporting

▸ Faster Time to Market

▸ Better Resource Planning & Utilization

▸ Improved Quality & Compliance

Friske cites two major advantages to the Aras PLM system over its competitors: flexibility and ease of use. "The ability to change processes, lifecycles and workflows, and add and remove fields to suit our needs really made it easy to tailor Aras to MiTek's specific needs," said Friske. "And the ability to take employees with no programming skills and in some cases little experience with desktop applications such as Word and Excel, and make them fully functional in

Aras was critical to our success. They can't write code, but with Aras they can create every item needed to build a functional process. No other product has this capability."

Big Gains in Automation, Integration & Visibility

Since implementing Aras, MiTek has made huge advancements in project management and utilization. "Because Aras is a web-based solution, managers can see the status of any project, at any time, from any location and so can our president. Managers can

optimize resources across all three R&D divisions. And our president can tell if a project has stalled, where it's stalled and why. We simply didn't have that information before," said Friske.

Aras is also integrated with MiTek's ERP system, which helps streamline and automate the design process. Before implementing Aras, MiTek's R&D teams had to manually complete numerous paper-based forms, then re-do the form for every design evaluation, then re-do that form again if the part failed the eval. People were constantly re-writing the same information over and over again and once the design was complete, they had to manually enter the same information into the ERP system. "Now, with Aras, our people touch the data only once," said Friske. "Aras is constantly updating our ERP system and vice versa. All design eval forms, design input forms, ISO forms, etc., are in Aras and we work from our Part Master form for all sign-offs." As Friske sees it, "Aras has become a workspace for R&D and a productivity enhancer for the entire company."

Building on its success, at the direction of MiTek's corporate-wide VP of engineering, the company will leverage Aras's time management capabilities to help determine exactly what it costs to take a project from inception to completion. "We always knew the physical costs, but there was no way to track and relate the time," explained Friske. "We want to know what it costs to produce a product, including the employee time, and now we can find out. Using Aras for time management, each user will enter their time as they work on an activity. When the project is done, we'll know exactly what it took to complete, in terms of time and tangible resources."

And MiTek doesn't plan to stop there. The company is looking at automating its engineering change process and integrating its CAD tools into Aras, as well as implementing help desk functionality to manage warranties, monitor problems and track time to repair. MiTek also plans to leverage Aras for scrum and failure modes, and effects analysis (FMEA) on the software side of the business. "Aras is going to become an extremely vital part of this organization, said Friske. "We can take it so much further. "

> *We expected the typical PLM system and that's not Aras. Aras is different. They don't do things like everyone else and it wasn't until we saw an Aras demo that we realized what a unique and powerful solution it is.*
>
> Kevin Friske
> Database Administrator,
> MiTek Corporation

aras corp ®

About Aras

Aras ® provides Aras Innovator ® as an enterprise open source software suite of solutions on the Microsoft platform. The enterprise production-ready software is available for download without cost and provides complete access for unlimited users.

Enterprise software for new product introduction, advanced product quality planning, and enterprise product lifecycle management provide businesses with a process-oriented approach to manage innovation and collaboration from concept through development and launch.

Aras solutions are designed to support Lean in the product development process while addressing product quality, risk management, and compliance in an integrated manner.

For more information on the Aras Innovator software solution suite and to download the software visit www.aras.com.

300 Brickstone Square
Andover, MA 01810
USA
[978] 691-8900 Phone
[978] 794-9826 Fax
info@aras.com
www.aras.com

www.aras.com