Summary
The success of agile chemistry manufacturing company Key Organics rests on delivering high-quality tailored solutions to customers in a range of industries. They believe in putting customers center stage, and that requires rapid and flexible access to relevant information. The researchers rely on Reaxys for the answers to their chemistry questions, using it to explore new products, design new synthesis plans and meet the specific demands of each customer.
“Speed and relevance are crucial to our operations. Reaxys lets us get things done.”
—Jody Ali, Custom Chemistry Project Manager at Key Organics

Key Organics is a Cornwall-based company that has been delivering stock and custom chemistry to businesses and research institutions around the world for nearly three decades. They have a reputation for reliability and service, maintaining long-term relationships with customers in a range of industries—from pharmaceuticals to agriculture and petrochemicals—with superior custom chemistry and their flagship offering, the BIONET catalog. The company’s project managers recognize that the quality of the products on offer is a major reason for their strong customer base, but believe that what makes customers come back is that they put extra effort into meeting customer’s needs in a tailored way that addresses problems precisely.

Challenge
At the core of how Key Organics operates is a continuous effort to anticipate the needs of customers and find ways to meet them with quality products and services. The chemists build on ongoing discussions with customers to evaluate the standing product portfolio, identify gaps in the offering and create novel products that add value for end users.

Head of Biochemicals, Fragments and Screening Compounds, Andrew Lowerson explains how his group works. “My team has a great deal of autonomy in developing products and aims to create increasingly targeted sets of compounds for our collections. This work fluidity keeps operations at Key Organics agile, allowing us to respond quickly to market trends and customer demands with new solutions and services. It also keeps things interesting!”

When it comes to delivering chemicals, Key Organics has two approaches: BIONET and custom projects. “The number of in-stock products of BIONET exceeds 96,000,” explains Custom Chemistry Project Manager Jody Ali. “Many are available in kilogram quantities, enabling us to deliver high-quality, high-purity products in specified quantities when requested. We refrain from listing virtual compounds in BIONET because synthesis and outsourcing adds to price and delivery time. We put a lot of resources into expanding BIONET in an effective manner, with products that are actually useful to customers and that can be produced and held in stock. For everything else, we find a way to supply it to the customer within a reasonable budget and timeframe.”

This agility requires rapid and multifaceted access to information. “We shy away from the generic approach,” explains Gary Lyons, project manager and IT and e-commerce coordinator. “Therefore, we have to use flexible tools that allow us to place a customer’s needs at the center and work out answers that move their work forward. Among those tools are our sources for information. We can’t spend a lot of time on searching.”

Ali adds: “With our previous chemistry research solution, getting to the essence of what I needed would just take too many clicks or scrolling through long lists of literature. It wasn’t how I wanted to spend my time.”

Solution
Scientists at Key Organics use Reaxys to explore new ideas and examine chemistry published in primary literature and patents. Project leaders in production and custom
services plan and prepare syntheses with the assistance of Reaxys Synthesis Planner. The extensive experimental details and substance property data housed in Reaxys are instrumental for development and manufacturing and the information also supports the generation of the analytical data that Key Organics provides to round off the delivery of each product.

Comparing Reaxys to the previous solution used at Key Organics, Ali explains that with Reaxys he gets at answers quicker, finds vastly more information on experimental and synthesis conditions, and does not spend as much time sifting through long lists of hits. “Speed and relevance are crucial to our operations. Reaxys lets us get things done.”

Reaxys users at Key Organics also appreciate the flexibility of the system. Ali explains how he and his team use Reaxys: “Quick, straightforward questions are answered with Quick Search. More complex queries are constructed with Querylets, which offer the functionality to target a query in a logical and transparent way. I often perform searches in Reaxys before assigning tasks to my team. I like that I can quickly amend my search. I know where information is located in Reaxys and can quickly navigate to the data I need. Then I just send it to the right team member.”

**Business Impact**

The markets that Key Organics serves are competitive and rapid-moving. Lowerson sees changes in the nature of orders: “In the past, orders were for screening all compounds in a collection. That has changed. Customers are now cherry-picking. I anticipate that service projects from customers will continue to get shorter, with more immediate and strictly defined outcomes.”

Ali agrees with this prediction. “This highlights the basis of our long-term relationships with customers. These build on the helpful interactions, the flexibility and the unique expertise that we offer. That won’t change.”

The versatility of Reaxys, its cross-disciplinary profile of the literature in its database, and its excetration of highly granular experimental and property data it provides are the right fit for Key Organics. Finding information that helps put customer needs center stage and deliver on their commitment to solve problems fast and efficiently will be key to success. Reaxys has already proven to be the right information system for Key Organics and Ali is exploring additional advantages of Reaxys, such as integrated bulk searches through APIs.

Supporting scientific creativity and business agility is a core mandate for the improvements made to Reaxys. Keeping pace with the time and information demands that scientists face is the driving force behind how Reaxys evolves and matures. In the future, Reaxys should be the solution that agile and innovative companies like Key Organics rely on to get answers, be it for their customers or for their own work.
Reaxys

Reaxys helps chemical companies develop commercially successful products by providing chemists the shortest path to data for synthesis optimization and the identification of desirable chemical properties in intermediate and end products.

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