COVID-19: COORDINATING THE PRODUCTION OF MEDICAL VENTILATORS FOR THE UK WITH ROLLS-ROYCE

In the middle of March, the COVID-19 pandemic was really heating up in the UK.

The Government put out a call to arms to UK industry to provide as many ventilators as possible as quickly as possible.

When people fall ill from the COVID virus one of the things they really need is the ability to breathe, and that’s where the ventilators play that vital role.

Ellen Trager, Managing Director, Aerospace & Defence, Accenture.

Accenture joined forces with companies from across several industries in the UK to form the Ventilator Challenge UK consortium.

Carrie McComb, Head of Procurement Excellence, Civil Aerospace, Rolls-Royce.

The members of the Consortium committed to manufacture a Smiths ventilator.

Simon Peters, Managing Director, Procurement & Supply Chain, Accenture.

Accenture partnered with Rolls-Royce to create a brand new supply chain to help scale up production of that particular design. This, at first, was a very daunting challenge. We had 292 parts that we had to source from around the world. These parts came from 107 different suppliers. The total volume of those parts was 3.6 million.

We had to make sure that suppliers were contracted, there could be purchase orders and invoices and payments flowing through everyone that was involved.

I would probably normally want at least a year to set everything up and to get everything through, but we actively had two weeks or maybe less.
The privilege of working for a company like Accenture is that the scale and experience and capability we can bring to a situation like this. We were able to bring in the right skills at the right time.

One of the first things we did was bring in Avanade our joint venture partner with Microsoft and put in place a cloud-based IT system. What that IT system allowed us to do was manage the complexity of this process.

We created the supply chain visibility to enable, you know, real time visibility on that day of performance.

Where was every part, how are we doing and progressing towards that production demand.

Continually monitoring that, allowed us to make sure we’re getting the best result.

It was just 10 days until all of the supply chain processes has been designed.

In 20 days, we had designed and built the order management system.

We delivered the first ventilator 47 days after we started which is an incredible result.

The speed and the quality and the problem-solving that everyone has been working through together has been just phenomenal.

I’m immensely proud to be part of this entire programme.

What Rolls-Royce and Accenture have achieved is nothing short of remarkable.