

Colin Dean | Corporate Systems Director | Arnold Laver

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The choice

Four years ago, Colin Dean oversaw the implementation of bisTrack across the Arnold Laver Group, with the software going live on the same day throughout 17 branches. “Obviously our main concern was that the trade counters would be able to process orders straight away,” he says, “but everyone was geared up for the changeover and it went really well.” At Laver’s Call Collect trade counters, the staff use barcode scanners with the bisTrack Counter Sales module, designed for very fast input allowing staff to enter orders by keyboard or scanning. Dean says the overriding benefit at the start was the ability for sales staff to find customer and product information very quickly.

Laver took the decision to use bisTrack after looking closely at many other business systems. Dean confirms it was the fact that bisTrack is written especially to serve the complex requirements of a timber company that led to its selection. Its modern Microsoft Windows technology and its ability to integrate seamlessly with Laver’s Microsoft Dynamics GP accounting software were also important.

Four years in

Now, after using bisTrack for four years and implementing it in two new branches, bisTrack continues to deliver benefits across the group and Laver continues to pioneer new modules of the software as they are introduced. For example, Laver is using bisTrack’s optional EDI module – eBusiness – to trade electronically with several major construction company customers. The field sales team use the bisTrack Mobile module to access real-time stock, pricing and customer data on bisTrack via their smart phones. This also provides a practical way for them to enter visit reports and requests into the system.

Web trading

bisTrack’s new Web Track module lets Laver offer an internet portal to around 20 of their major customers, through which they can access information about their account with Laver from anywhere in the world. They can check balances, credit limits, track the status of outstanding orders, check prices, stock availability and

raise quotes and orders, all in real-time. They can search for invoices by date, reference or order number and even click straight through to view the related signed PoD, when the Laver delivery vehicle returns to the yard.

Vehicle tracking

The ability to link bisTrack seamlessly with GPSs embedded into Laver’s vehicles has enabled sales and transport staff to improve customer service by being able to pinpoint the location of their commercial vehicles and to advise customers instantly about delivery times. Transport managers also use bisTrack’s drag-and-drop Journey Planner. Using just one screen, delivery runs are created simply by dragging and dropping orders on to their allocated journey. (Very much like you’d manage a calendar in Outlook.)



Arnold Laver

Selecting the right business software is a crucial decision according to Colin Dean, Corporate Systems Director at Arnold Laver. “Our computer system impacts on every aspect of the business,” he says, “buying, selling, importing, stock control, works order processing and deliveries. If you install the wrong software, which might not support the required number of users or doesn’t have the right level of performance or functionality, the implications are that it can cause significant issues throughout your business.”

Andrew Laver | Managing Director | Arnold Laver

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Stock revolution

bisTrack has also revolutionised stock taking at Laver. Colin Dean was once told it was impossible to stock control timber accurately! He refused to believe this and proved his point last year, when his team counted £1.1 million worth of stock at Laver’s flagship branch in Mosborough, to an accuracy of £2,700 (or just under 0.25%). Dean attributes the accuracy down to the way branch sales manager Andy Pigott has made full use of bisTrack to store a picking location for every single stock line. Pick notes are now produced at each picking zone, detailing individual bin locations of all products ordered. The labels used to identify the bin locations are also produced from bisTrack data using Crystal Reports. bisTrack also supports Andy’s meticulous system of recording all stock movements within the branch, including relocations. When it comes to actual physical stock takes, the system prints out detailed count sheets in picking zone order. After staff have completed the count sheets the figures can be keyed-in very quickly, as the running order corresponds to the stock take document created on the system. Previously at Laver, the count would take place at the end of June, with final results available at the end of October. This year, the count started on 28th June, with initial figures presented on 2nd July.

Manufacturing and works orders

Colin also says it would be impossible to control Laver’s stock so accurately if bisTrack wasn’t integrated with the company’s manufacturing processes. At the Mosborough branch alone, just over 13,500 works orders were processed and cost controlled within bisTrack during the first six months of this year. bisTrack debits stock of raw or unfinished products when a works order is raised and then credits stock with the finished packs or processed products. The software also supports purchase orders to external suppliers of processes and works orders linked to sales orders and any permutations of stock transfer, purchase order and process. A real benefit of having all the elements of a transaction linked together via bisTrack’s related documents function is the instant visibility from any part of the system – a huge advantage when recording chain of custody for environmental purposes.

No regrets

After a four year relationship with Progressive Solutions and bisTrack, Colin Dean believes the partnership and product have both grown from strength to strength. Whether it be the Service team personnel, who are incredibly knowledgeable and helpful, or the Development team who continue to produce high quality software which can be implemented without impact to the business. In addition, the Management team keep Laver’s abreast of company improvements and new customers who bring a rich set of enhancements with every acquisition.

Managing Director, Andrew Laver, concludes, “We spent a long time evaluating several systems and I’m confident that bisTrack is the best available.”



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