

bisTrack | Case Study



“There’s not much difference between traditional wholesalers, So I wanted to start with a clean sheet of paper, to do what I wanted and not be restricted in any way by an established, old-fashioned business format.”

Alistair Ferrie | Managing Director | Electrical Wholesale (Huddersfield) Ltd

New software, new startup

Based in the centre of Huddersfield, the new company boasts 3,000 sq. ft. of sales space, fitted out with individual workstations where customers will be able to sit whilst being served, rather than the traditional trade counter. “My objective is to get customers served as quickly and efficiently as possible,” says Alistair, “in a modern, comfortable environment.”

Whilst the organisation of premises, choosing suppliers and producing a catalogue were relatively easy tasks for someone with Alistair’s experience, he soon discovered the hardest job of all was the selection of an IT system and supplier. “As my background was predominantly in sales, I had always been handed a system on a plate and just worked with whatever I was given. However because of the type of business I was setting up and the investment it represented, I wanted modern technology – something which would give me what other systems couldn’t – rather than just going with all the rest”.

Together with an IT specialist, he looked at what four or five system providers could offer and only then did he realise the huge disparity in systems available in terms of what they could bring to his business, their ability to respond to his future needs and the suppliers’ general attitude to his requirements.

Luckins integration

“A key requirement was obviously something which would interface with Luckins and, because I wanted to be able to serve customers quickly, I also wanted bar code technology and touch screens, a transport planning module and the ability to interface with route planning software to maximise deliveries.”

The system Alistair eventually selected was bisTrack – a Luckins software partner – and which was designed for suppliers to the building industry. It’s also designed for single or multi-branch use and to offer straightforward integration with specialist hardware add-ons such as hand-helds and wireless bar code scanners. The system is also designed to interface with most of the popular financial packages so often there is no need to change from existing accounts packages used.

The Luckins database, now containing more than 450,000 products, has been integrated with the system and, when a customer requires an item not normally stocked, bisTrack can search for it in Luckins and either create a new stock product record or use the information to create a ‘special’, with a back-to-back purchase order automatically sent to the supplier. This purchase order, once approved, can then be faxed or emailed directly from the desktop – as can all other documents on the system.

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Electrical Wholesale

After 27 years experience in the electrical wholesaler industry, Alistair Ferrie reckons he knows what his customers want! Therefore when his new wholesaler operation, Electrical Wholesale (Huddersfield) Ltd, opens its doors for business, customers will find a supplier which has moved away from the traditional approach to wholesaling and where ‘leading edge’ rules! Alistair’s new attitude will encompass all aspects of his business including the types of products he’s planning to sell (Data products, Smart Home Systems, etc.), the open plan sales area with plasma screen TV and internet access – and his choice of management software.



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Power and control

bisTrack provides facilities for all aspects of the business. On the sales front, quotations can be produced and then simply converted to orders. Stock availability is maintained throughout and accurate margin information is available at both line and total level. Sophisticated negotiation facilities are included, allowing the sales person to input the margin or profit figure required, and then the system will suggest a suitable price. Because all bisTrack's data is held in a Microsoft SQL Server database, product and customer searches are exceptionally fast and do not have to rely on indexes or keywords. Another feature Alistair particularly liked was the ability to instantly link to manufacturers' websites to check product specifications.

Margin control is obviously very important to all business owners and the system's customised 'dashboard' displays live management summary information such as total value of orders taken today – plus the profit margin – to authorised users. Alistair was also particularly impressed by the sales analysis facility and the way this can be presented in various graphical formats.

So very easy

bisTrack contained all the features the company wanted and, more importantly, was very easy to use. Much of the software used by the wholesaling industry has been around for many years and was designed before Microsoft Windows became the world-wide standard for all modern applications.

These older systems often present a challenge to new staff entering the industry from school or college where they have used Windows based systems for many years. Suddenly they have to learn old-fashioned systems without the graphical interface they take for granted.

“The fact that around 97% of businesses in the world use Microsoft-based systems was a huge comfort factor in our decision to go with bisTrack,” says Alistair, “there was nothing on the system which frightened me and I knew it was going to be easy for me and my staff to learn and use.”

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