

bisTrack

Case Study



John Cavanagh | Managing Director | J Cavanagh Ltd

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Management team liberated by bisTrack

Before bisTrack, all sales transactions at J Cavanagh Ltd were conducted manually and entered into the Sage back office system at the end of each day. When John Cavanagh decided to take the plunge and computerise his sales and invoicing system, he admits he had reservations at first, particularly when Ged Griffin from Progressive's implementation team arrived armed with several large manuals! "That scared me a bit," John admits, "but Ged said I only needed to understand the first page! The 'talking day' – the first step in the implementation of a bisTrack system at a company of this size – follows a set format and introduces the implementation team to the relevant sites and users, allows them to fully understand the way a company conducts its business, and determines how the whole implementation process will be administered."

John remembers, "At the end of that first day, when we had also spoken to the hardware company, I realised there was no going back, but by this time I was feeling really confident. I understood how the whole implementation process would be administered, how the system would be configured for us once installed, the remote support, how we would transfer all our product, pricing and customer data, and how we were going to train the staff."

John had maintained a price book over many years, which listed all 3,500 products and seven different price bands. Whilst the hardware and trunking was being installed, John used the time to paste the pricing information into a template provided by Ged for the team to input into bisTrack. This job took around a week to complete. All the customer information, including their allocated price band, was transferred directly into bisTrack from Cavanagh's Sage system.

Rapid transition

John said, "The plan was to run the bisTrack test system on the counter for a month or so, alongside our manual system, but to be honest after a couple of days I felt we were ready to go live and there seemed little point trying to prove the computer was wrong! From being frightened and worrying if I had done the right thing, implementation all happened very easily and I soon realised this was the best thing we had ever done!"



J Cavanagh Ltd

J Cavanagh Ltd was established as a timber importer in 1975. Until recently they operated as a merchant with branches in Manchester and Macclesfield. After installing bisTrack, the business has found the focus and time to take on a new branch in Winsford. Cavanagh's customers are predominantly small builders who purchase timber and associated products. There are 23 employees.

Since implementing bisTrack last year, John Cavanagh reckons he's saving two working days a week! "To gain that amount of time is staggering," he says. "I'm a great believer that a manager should 'manage' and spend time just observing what's going on, greeting customers and such like. With the time both my managers and I have saved by not having to price up advice notes or cash up each day, we've now got more time to make improvements in the business. I've also found we're selling more obscure stock items as we have time to promote them properly."



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“ bisTrack has brought us out of the Stone Age! ”

Counter intelligence

John continued, “An early benefit was customers no longer arguing over which price they got. I used to see them looking at the book and questioning it, but that’s all stopped now and they just accept the price bisTrack gives them. Another benefit is the way bisTrack instantly flags if a customer is ‘on stop’. It’s very powerful when the guy on the counter can look at bisTrack and say ‘Sorry you’re on stop, I need a cheque’, and we’ve seen a dramatic increase in cash flow because of this. I estimate we used to miss a customer on stop, say, seven out of ten times, as I used to have to keep physically updating and producing a list.

“Once, a customer with a credit limit of £4,000 managed to get up to £6,000 by buying at both branches before going bust. With bisTrack we could have stopped him at £4,000. Now I’ve got more time to spot things like this in advance. For example, I noticed immediately through bisTrack that a new account customer at Macclesfield was coming in each day and spending a lot. I was concerned and called him. In fact there was no problem, he simply said ‘how much do you want?’ and we sorted it out. But what was brilliant was having the time and ability to spot it in advance.

“bisTrack’s pop-up messages are great too. For example one of our customers only allows one contact to use the account. When they order at the counter, a pop-up message asks the sales staff, ‘Please check this customer is so and so’. Another says, ‘When this customer buys timber they must have a certain type of order number’. We have a lot of seasonal workers coming in now, and using the information in front of them in bisTrack, it’s easy for the sales staff to verify what company they work for and which address should be invoiced.”

John concludes, “bisTrack has made us look more professional, we’re no longer perceived as something out of the Stone Age! And with the time it’s saved us, we’ve carried out some refurbishments at the Macclesfield branch and I’ve taken my first holiday! I also love the fact that it’s connected the two branches together. There also seems to be more money in the bank, but to be honest, if we had been told bisTrack will keep your margin the same but will gain you two more days each week, I would still have bought it!”

New branch? No problem

John Cavanagh believes that bisTrack gave him the time he needed to plan the opening of a third branch. Now the new branch is up and running, the system also allows him to monitor and control the business there, all from the comfort of his head office desk, 30 miles away.

“From day one, I could see what we were selling from the new branch through live information on my desktop in the Fallowfield head office, as well as the margins we were making there,” said John.

“My new branch manager, who wasn’t used to working with computers, spent a week at our Fallowfield branch, getting to know how bisTrack worked. Paperwork had been getting him down when he worked for me five years ago, when we ran a manual system, and where 100 or so tickets a day had to be written up manually. He had no problem adjusting to working with bisTrack! I wish we had installed it years ago – then he probably wouldn’t have left!”



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