

# Progressive News

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## bisTrack – serving businesses nationwide!

bisTrack software helps to manage businesses across the UK and Ireland and the newest users continue to represent a wide geographical spread – as well as a broad range of business types and sizes.

Representing Scotland among the latest building industry suppliers to sign up for bisTrack is Paisley based timber merchants, Timber and Plywood Services Ltd. In Wales, bisTrack goes live early next year at Carmarthenshire based James Davies Abercych Ltd, softwood sawmillers and fencing manufacturers.

Mazz Musa, a partner at Golita Supplies, says he's looking forward to going live with bisTrack in the next couple of months at his Blackburn based business which supplies the plumbing and electrical trades as well as general ironmongery, hardware and DIY products. While over in Leeds, Woodlands Sheds operates both manufacturing and retail sites where 15 users will start logging on to bisTrack in November. Meanwhile, already reaping some early benefits from

bisTrack in Co. Down, Northern Ireland is Phoenix Merchants Ltd.

New bisTrack user, Alsford Timber, operates throughout the South East. Managing Director, Neil Fuller explained that bisTrack was specified for his company primarily because of the 'business fit'. He said "Above all we wanted a Microsoft Windows based, intuitive solution which would best serve our claim to be 'The Timber Experts' in all of our 20 branches."

In Cambridgeshire, single branch Huntingdon Timber and Roofing offers cutting, planing and moulding facilities. Managing Director, David Biddle implemented bisTrack earlier this year. He explains, "We were drowning in paper and, as a business turning over £2.2 million, the time had come for us to invest in business management



David Biddle, Huntingdon Timber

software. Another reason we went for bisTrack was because it's so timber friendly." David is now seriously considering setting up a second branch which he was unwilling to do without fully operational software. "This was another reason for choosing bisTrack now", he says, "bisTrack will make our expansion programme so much easier because I will be able to use the system to control both branches from my office here in Huntingdon."



## Arthur in control

Following the retirement of Robert Collins earlier this year, Arthur Duffy was appointed Director of Operations at Progressive Solutions. Arthur joined Progressive two years ago, since which time the company has seen consistent growth – 40% last year – as well as expansion of its development, implementation, sales and support teams.

"My appointment represents both a huge challenge and a fantastic opportunity for me to drive the company and our products further forward and to enhance the already strong partnerships with our customers."

In a second appointment, Gary Brookshaw was promoted to the role of Product Director. He said, "Now the product is very mature, we're entering a phase where we'll be improving existing functionality rather than just adding new features. I'll be spending a lot more time with customers to understand their needs and we'll also have more time available in development to work on change requests for customers.

Over the coming months we'll be spending a lot of time on improving works order processing – this covers scheduling, better cost control and part completion of works order. We'll also continue to improve Business Intelligence – we want people to be able to easily leverage all the data they are collecting."

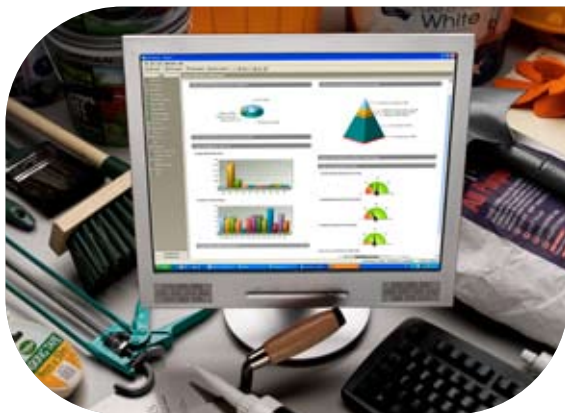


Arthur Duffy,  
Gary Brookshaw

## bisTrack delivers 3% more margin at Cavanagh's

A year on from implementing bisTrack at his two branch timber merchant, John Cavanagh's accountant has just confirmed a significant margin increase on last year. "I suspected the figure had improved but now we know that margin is up by 3%" he said. "I think it's mainly down to the way bisTrack has eliminated miscalculations and general human error. It's not been the best of trading conditions recently, we've had to cut profit on some orders and we've had higher costs too but, in spite of this, we've still come out significantly better."

John's company was running a manual sales system with Sage in the back office before he implemented bisTrack. An immediate benefit he saw was the time he gained, which enabled him to make improvements in the business and to plan the opening of a third branch. He added, "bisTrack will give me the ability to see what's going on in all three branches at any given time."



Choose your view – bisTrack's new customisable dashboard, a standard feature of the software, lets you choose the performance indicators which are most important to you, in the style you prefer.

## Laver's celebrates three years with bisTrack and implements new modules

Three years ago, Colin Dean, Corporate Systems Director at the Arnold Laver Group, oversaw the implementation of bisTrack at 17 of the group's branches. "Obviously our main concern was that the trade counters would be able to process orders straight away," he remembers, "but everyone was geared up for the changeover and it went really well."

Now, with the software live in two further branches it's continuing to deliver benefits across the group and Laver's continues to pioneer new modules as they are introduced. For example, the company is now 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.

The Web Track module lets Laver's offer an internet portal to around 20 of their major customers through which they can access information about their account with Laver's 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 within two hours of Laver's delivery vehicle returning to the yard!

The ability to link bisTrack seamlessly with GPS embedded

into Laver's individual vehicles has enabled sales and transport staff to improve customer service by being able to pinpoint the actual location of their commercial vehicles and to advise customers instantly about delivery times.

bisTrack has also revolutionised the stock taking process at Laver's. 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! Dean 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. After a three year relationship between Progressive and bisTrack, Dean believes the partnership and product have both grown from strength to strength. He adds, "The Support Desk personnel are incredibly knowledgeable and helpful and the Development Team continue to produce high quality software which can be implemented without impact to the business."



# GPH – growing fast with bisTrack

GPH Builders Merchant, the independent Aberdeenshire based company, was one of the first UK merchants to implement bisTrack software. A company with a strong



Director Nikki Mortimer with Steve Grieg, GPH's IT and Communications Technician

reputation among local builders for service and quality, it celebrated 25 years in business last year by moving to a new purpose built three acre site in Inverurie. A second branch operates from nearby Westhill.

The early days of using the bisTrack computer system were not always plain sailing and GPH encountered a number of issues which they worked closely with PSI to resolve. Gary Brookshaw, Progressive's Product Director, agrees that early users of bisTrack contributed enormously to the development of the software. He says "We've relied on working closely with our customers from day one. Many of them have funded or suggested changes that we've then made generic enough to benefit all. This practice continues today and just makes bisTrack better and better."

Four years on from implementing the core bisTrack product, GPH have become one of the earliest users of one of the newest modules – Scan Track. GPH's Managing Director, Mike MacLellan explains, "We took the decision to invest in some sort of scanning facility mainly to help us find related documents. Typically larger customers or local authorities will demand a signed proof of delivery which used to mean someone wasting time searching through archives. We looked at other scanning systems but we liked the way Scan Track dovetails with the core bisTrack data through related documents and it's been a big success for us. We use it mainly to scan in proof of delivery notes but also for purchase ledger invoices. For example, if I want to double check a price or the unit of measure on a purchase invoice, instead of retrieving a folder from the archive I can just 'right click' and see the information on screen."

Steve Grieg is GPH's IT and Communications Technician and likes the way bisTrack can be configured to suit the requirements of individual businesses. For example, to speed sales transactions, the touch screens on GPH's trade counter include buttons linked directly to the top five customer accounts (by volume of transactions) – an idea suggested to him at a User Group meeting. He has also shown sales staff how to check what customers have been charged for a product in the past at the other branch.

With Mike MacLellan citing pressure on margins as the biggest challenge facing him today, bisTrack helps by flagging up low margin sales on its message board. He says, "Most of the time these turn



Touch screens on GPH's trade counter include buttons linked directly to the top five customer accounts

out to be genuine price negotiations by staff who are authorised to do so, but it's picked up some genuine pricing errors which we've been able to correct as they happen, which is a big bonus."

He concludes, "There's no doubt that bisTrack is a good tool. We've a fantastic record for growth and we're getting a lot out of bisTrack now particularly over the control of our business."

## Face to face with bisTrack

In March 2009, there'll be a series of bisTrack information days. Venues will be Manchester and Reading, but dates are not yet confirmed. Please email your details and choice of venue to [info@progressive-solutions.co.uk](mailto:info@progressive-solutions.co.uk) with 'information days' in the subject line. and we'll let you know as soon as dates are fixed

# Progressive sponsors key category at Timber Awards



Guests at this year's Timber Awards found Charles Kennedy to be an unaffected and highly amusing presenter, with a genuine appreciation for the challenges facing today's timber industry.



Once again, Progressive sponsored the Hardwood Trader of the Year award and, once again, President and CEO, Len Williams, presented the award to customer David Haywood of Timbmet!



David Haywood and Len Williams

Another Progressive customer, James Latham plc, picked up the top award – Timber Trader of the Year. Latham's Group Finance Director, David Dunmow said, "We were obviously very pleased to win this award as we believe it reflects honesty, integrity and good customer service. These values are certainly easier to achieve with good IT systems to back up our staff. Progressive provides us with an efficient system for dealing face to face with customers, and good management tools to enable us to concentrate our efforts in the right direction."

## T L Thomas a case study:

**“Implementing bisTrack software was probably the best change we’ve ever made to our business – and we did it at just the right time.”**

This was the view of Gerwyn Thomas, a partner at Carmarthenshire based builders’ merchants, T L Thomas & Son, just two months after going live with bisTrack earlier this year. Before bisTrack, the company ran a totally manual sales and stock control system with Sage managing the back office accounts. The company produces high volumes of small value invoices which meant daily pricing up of invoices, after business hours, to keep the Sage system updated. Now bisTrack produces all the invoices neatly priced up and ready for them to send out.



TL Thomas partners:  
Gerwyn Thomas and Anwen Lloyd-Thomas

Gerwyn explained, “What I really wanted was a system which would cope with our timber products. They’re all tally products and we sell mostly in cubic metres or ‘each’ so the conversion system for cubic metre, linear metre and ‘each’ in bisTrack really helps us.”

Other immediate benefits for the sales staff included the ability to find related documentation when customers return products. “No one ever brings any paperwork back with them in this part of the world”, Gerwyn said, “but bisTrack’s related documents feature lets us see when a product was bought, how much the customer paid and what discount we gave. The system has enabled all the office and counter staff to work in a totally different way now and much more quickly. Everything used to be so time consuming.”

Discount structures for different categories of account customer have been set up and price lists are also being produced directly from bisTrack for individual categories which are automatically updated when prices go up in bisTrack.

Gerwyn also plans to implement the software in his sawmill later this year, a customer database is already installed and work has started on



A yard with a view

product and price lists. Gerwyn says he’s confident bisTrack has the flexibility to manage the conversion of timber packs for stock control and all the machining permutations they offer.

Overall he says he has a much better grasp on the business since bisTrack was installed. “bisTrack’s dashboard view is a big plus as it lets me keep a ‘minute by minute’ eye on the company’s performance. I also like the warnings you get if something is sold below margin, and how I can quickly see why it’s happened.

The pop up messages alerting you when back-to-back orders have come in, so you can let your customer know, are also excellent. bisTrack was a big investment for us but it’s the best change we’ve ever made.”



### Progressive grows its team

Ilan Knox has joined the Progressive team as Financial Management Consultant. With over 15 years’ experience in business and commerce, Ian will be working with the various departments at Progressive and the financial staff and board members of new and existing clients. An excellent communicator, Ian will be managing any issues arising from installations and making the appropriate commercial judgements.

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