

bisTrack | Case Study



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Andrew Smith | Managing Director | Qualplas

Software that stands out in a crowd!

The company's purpose built 10,000 ft² premises comprises of showroom, trade counter and a manufacturing plant. Products are manufactured using the premium brand VEKA profile. Recently the company has introduced a US-produced FITRITE, a modular UPVC/galvanised steel decking system for the holiday home market.

Up until January 2006, sales transactions were simply recorded by a till in the showroom. Andrew was therefore keen to introduce business software which would give him closer control over order processing and make management information more accessible, to help him develop the business.

Keep it in the family Andrew turned to bisTrack, developed by Progressive Solutions, as he had already successfully implemented the software at the ST Group, his family-owned builders' merchants operation. bisTrack was especially developed for all types of distribution companies serving the building industry including builders', timber and plumbers' merchants, steel stockholders and electrical wholesalers He explains: “At ST Group, our old DOS-based system, which we used for order processing, was not industry specific and I was becoming concerned about the supplier's lack of development plans for the software.”

“I wanted a Microsoft Windows-based system with the ability to interface with other Windows products and which was designed to develop in line with my own plans for growth in ST Group.”

Viewing the competition Andrew and his team checked out three systems in detail and it was during the bisTrack demonstration that they saw how the system stood out from the crowd. “In terms of the wealth of management information I could access with bisTrack, it stood head and shoulders above the other systems we looked at,” remembers Andrew. “I also liked the fact that Progressive Solutions had designed the system for the industry we worked in and that they obviously understood it.”

After running the system successfully at ST Group for two years there are now six customer-facing bisTrack users at Qualplas. Staff training at both companies was taken particularly seriously. “We attracted funds from the Learning and Skills Council,” explains Andrew, “which enabled us to set up a training suite, employ a qualified trainer and set up a sort of 'conveyor belt' of training activity.” There are however rarely any problems teaching staff how to use bisTrack, because it has been designed to look similar to Microsoft Outlook and features familiar drag-and-drop and drill-down mechanisms.



Qualplas

St. Helens-based Qualplas was established by Andrew Smith 19 years ago to take advantage of the early interest in PVCu window manufacture. The company quickly built a strong reputation locally where it now supplies windows, doors, conservatories, decorative claddings and roofline systems to trade customers, as well as offering a supply and fit service to the retail market.



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Slicing and dicing

bisTrack's 'OLAP cube' reporting function allows a whole array of data to be processed and displayed for sales and product analysis purposes. From a management point of view Andrew is delighted with the speed with which he can use the drill-down mechanisms to retrieve accurate customer and product information from bisTrack. "I can instantly check what a customer has bought, how much they spent and the margin we made. If a trade customer asks me for more discount because he's spending a certain amount with us, I can look at his trading history on bisTrack and make an informed decision very quickly. bisTrack takes all the guesswork out of this type of decision."

Andrew concludes: "Now, although our two companies are autonomous, I can access sales information and check the performance of both from my laptop. We've also set up remote accessing so wherever I am I can keep a close eye on the day-to-day operations of both the ST Group and Qualplas."

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