

bisTrack | Case Study



“ If I was going to ask someone to write a programme to help me run my business, it wouldn't be far off bisTrack! I like the fact that it's so easy now to follow things through on just one screen and by using the mouse. ”

Gary George | Managing Director | Thames Fixings and Fasteners

Thames Fixings and Fasteners

bisTrack software made a 'dramatic difference' at Thames Fixings and Fasteners according to MD, Gary George. The Oxfordshire-based company, which trades in more than 4,500 product lines including fittings, ironmongery and joinery products, supplies national house builders, local authorities and smaller building contractors. There are 17 staff employed at its single site operation in Didcot, from where the company uses its own fleet of Transit vans for deliveries. Just 10% of orders arrive via the trade counter, with the majority received by telephone, email or fax.

bisTrack was implemented four years ago, replacing an old character-based system. Although Gary says it's difficult to remember what life was like 'before bisTrack', one immediate benefit was the ability to produce instant business reports. "We used to have to write mini-programmes to produce various reports from our old system" he said. "Now I can run real time sales analysis, product or purchasing reports with just a couple of clicks!"

Because bisTrack is built entirely in Microsoft Windows, Gary also found it was suddenly so much easier to follow things through on just one screen and by using the mouse. He said, "For example, it's particularly easy for me to allocate orders to deliveries — I just sort them by postcode and can easily swap items between journeys, as each one can be kept open on the same screen."

Secure and custom Fixings and Fasteners

At TFF, each bisTrack user's dashboard is set up on a 'need to know' basis, keeping things simple and ensuring only the right people have access to sensitive information. The graphical performance monitor summarises vital information for Gary, such as total invoices today or by month and the margin achieved. He said, "This feature allows me to see what's going on and how the business is performing."

Integrating

bisTrack is developed completely in Microsoft architecture and therefore integrates seamlessly with Microsoft Office products such as Excel and Outlook, as well as the internet – unlike the old TFF system. "You can get into Word, fax and email very quickly and everything is closely linked and accessible" said Gary. "With our old system, it used to take ages retyping prices into Excel, now you can export data with a couple of mouse clicks. This makes it easy to produce a chasing list or a customer specific price list. We can also merge data into credit control letters and our other template documents stored in Word."

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When asked to describe what running his business was like before the installation of bisTrack business information software at Thames Fixings and Fasteners, Managing Director, Gary George, says it's difficult to remember!



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Gary George | Managing Director | Thames Fixings and Fasteners

Keeping track

Because bisTrack allows customer data to be sorted in any order such as by county or by 'on stop', Gary says he uses this feature to enable him to call other customers grouped in a remote delivery area for example, to check if they need anything. This feature also makes it easy to sort a list of customers who always buy particular products so they can be targeted with specific promotions.

On the sales front, bisTrack produces quotes which can be quickly converted to orders. Links set up with suppliers' home pages allow for quick reference over product specification. Stock availability is maintained and accurate margin information is available at both line and total order level.

Slicing and dicing

Sophisticated negotiation facilities are included, allowing an authorised user to input the margin or profit figure required and bisTrack can suggest a suitable price. All orders are approved by Gary via prompts from the internal messaging system.

With purchasing, bisTrack suggests purchase order items and quantities, based on how well products sell. Purchase orders are also created automatically for non-stock specials, and for any other items ordered on a back to back basis. When the stock arrives, the salesperson who originally created the order is informed via a dashboard message, so the customer can be informed. Dashboard

messages can also be generated for other situations such as customer credit issues, sales that made less than margin or sales leading to out of stock situations and these are directed to the appropriate individual so action can be taken.

However, the feature which still impresses Gary George the most is 'Find Documents'. "This feature is quite wonderful!" he says, "You can't NOT find something on this system. For example if a customer wants a list of all the items ordered for a particular job several months ago, bisTrack has no problem finding it."

Just right

Gary and his team quickly learnt how to use the system and new staff have no problems taking it on. Because it's Windows based, each bisTrack screen looks familiar to anyone used to using Microsoft Outlook or Word. Minimal training is normally required and few mistakes are made.

Gary says he's hard pushed to find something bisTrack doesn't do! He's still convinced he made the right choice of business software four years ago and maintains "If I had asked someone to write me a bespoke programme to run my business, it wouldn't be far off bisTrack!"

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