



Microsoft Customer Solution Customer Solution Case Study

British Butcher Deploys New Solution for Enhanced Customer Service

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Food and Beverage

Customer Profile

The Barton Meat Company, part of the 3663 First for Foodservice Group, supplies meat, dairy, and specialist food products to customers throughout the United Kingdom.

Business Situation

The company wanted new technology solutions to streamline order processing, enhance reporting, and improve customer service.

Solution

The solution was based on Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® financial management, sales order processing, and telesales functions, enhanced by Trinity's Myridas software modules.

Benefits

- Centralised product information and pricing
- Fast, accurate order processing
- 'Catchweight' functionality ensures effective weighing, pricing, and invoicing for special orders
- Robust system handles large order volumes
- Better logistics management

“With Trinity and Microsoft Business Solutions, we have a solution that will grow as we grow. In addition, the system can be deployed rapidly at new site locations with no disruption to our normal business activities.”

David Barton, Director of the Barton Meat Company

The Barton Meat Company provides quality meat, dairy, and speciality food products in the United Kingdom. The organisation's success depends not only on the quality of its products, but also on the standard of its customer service. As a result, it has deployed new technology solutions to streamline order processing, enhance reporting, and improve customer service across the board. The new system is based on Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®. It offers centralised product information and pricing so customer queries can be addressed quickly and effectively. It also provides tools to ensure that orders are invoiced correctly and special orders can be weighed, priced, and invoiced automatically using a new 'catchweight' feature. The new system also improves the efficiency of logistics management with a better view of deliveries, routes, and available vehicles.

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Situation

In the food industry, the standard of customer service is almost as important as the quality of products delivered. As a result, The Barton Meat Company is committed to providing a service that equals the premium quality of its meat, dairy, and speciality food products.

David Barton, Director of The Barton Meat Company, says: “In this market, the quality of our order handling, distribution, and reporting is critical. As a result, we needed new information technology solutions to streamline these processes and support our transition from a regional catering butcher to a national food-service organisation.”

To increase the effectiveness of customer service, The Barton Meat Company needs to take orders quickly and effectively by phone around the clock. Barton says: “We needed a telesales system that would be both scalable and robust, whilst bringing the efficiency and automation that we wanted to see in this business process.”

In addition, new systems were required to centralise pricing across the company and report on customer orders more effectively. Finally, The Barton Meat Company wanted a technology solution to help it weigh, price, and invoice products more effectively.

As well as streamlining its customer service functions, the company needed a scalable solution that could grow with the business. Barton says: “Any technology we deploy must support our plans for growth instead of constraining them.”

Solution

After a careful evaluation of available business solutions, The Barton Meat Company chose to implement new systems based on Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® and Trinity's Myridas software modules. While Microsoft Great Plains software offers state-of-the-art modules for financial management, sales order processing, and telesales functions, Trinity has specific expertise in the food-service sector.

The new solution was implemented using a thin-client system based on Citrix technologies. The business application is hosted on a centralised server and made available through a virtual private network (VPN) and ADSL links to more than 100 users (45 concurrent users) across the organisation. Because of close collaboration between Trinity and Barton Meat Company IT teams, the new solution was deployed in just three months.

Now, telesales personnel at each of the company's sites can answer customer queries and take orders around-the-clock. Chefs, for example, can place highly-specialised orders in the early hours of the morning for same day delivery. Telesales teams are already handling the bulk of customer sales orders using the new system.

Each Barton Meat Company factory location was previously responsible for regional pricing. Now, telesales and other employees access pricing from a centrally negotiated list. This reduces complexity and costs in terms of price list creation and maintenance.

The system also offers new features for more effective, real-time reporting. Previously, one member of staff spent half of every day

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reporting on sales at each regional factory. Barton says: “Using technology from Microsoft Business Solutions, we have made significant time savings. Because accurate sales data can now be accessed quickly, only one person is required to report on the entire business. This frees regional personnel to focus on value-added activities and increases the quality of reporting across the board.” Customers can choose from specially prepared orders that vary in weight. To improve the efficiency of the sales process in these cases, Trinity has developed a specific tool, known as ‘catchweights.’ This allows the person preparing special orders to enter the weight of the finished product. The item is then automatically priced and invoiced for delivery to the customer.

Barton says: “Catchweight was an essential requirement for us. I am pleased to say that the catchweight functionality offered by Trinity’s Myridas solution works very well and gives us all the tools we need for accurate invoicing and reporting.”

The new system provides customers with detailed information on the orders they have placed. This requirement was previously fulfilled manually from different data sources. It sometimes took days to complete and resulted in a significant drain on resources.

Benefits

Leading Technology Partners

Trinity has a wealth of experience delivering software solutions for the food-service sector. At the same time, Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains offers a range of software modules that optimise business processes, from financial reporting to telesales.

Barton says: “Through a number of development projects, Trinity has proven its in-depth understanding of our business. The company’s IT team was always on top of things during the implementation process. It also demonstrated excellent project management skills ensuring rapid time to market, excellent post-deployment training, and outstanding ongoing support.

“The choice of Microsoft Great Plains to power the new system also gives us reassurance that the underlying technologies will be fully-supported in the long term. Given that we have only scratched the surface of the IT potential offered by Trinity and Microsoft Business Solutions, we are certain to capitalise on our investments so far.”

Enhanced Customer Experience

The new solution supports fast, accurate order processing by telephone. It also offers detailed information on all available items, ensuring that telesales representatives can answer customer queries quickly and accurately. These benefits directly enhance the customer experience and increase the company’s competitive advantage.

Barton says: “Sales orders are now entered directly into the system while the customer is on the phone. Employees can access all the product and pricing information they need immediately, ensuring that orders and invoices are right the first time. As a result, we have seen a significant improvement in the speed and efficiency of orders that are processed on the phone. There has also been a concurrent improvement in the way we handle customer enquiries in general.”

In addition to improvements in order processing, Barton Meat Company employees

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David Barton, Director of the Barton Meat Company

can now store details of customer orders. As a result, they can process repeat orders much more quickly, and increase convenience for customers.

Better Pricing

Microsoft Business Solutions technology supports centralised price lists across the organisation. These can be updated and changed quickly and easily using standard product codes that are recognised by the system.

Barton says: “We have seen a dramatic reduction in the time and costs associated with price list generation and maintenance. In addition, we are pricing products more accurately across the board, reducing errors, and increasing profitability. It is now easier to create a price list for our entire product range than ever before.”

Improved Logistics Management

Historically, logistics management, including the allocation of deliveries to more than 100 vehicles, was handled manually. Now, these processes are supported by Trinity’s Vehicle Load Scheduling software module and Microsoft Business Solutions technology. As a result, The Barton Meat Company is experiencing significant improvements in logistics management.

Barton says: “Once an order is taken, the system generates a picking ticket that is organised to align with our existing picking processes. We then use the load scheduling features of the software to assign picked and packed orders to specific vans on specific routes, to be delivered in specific orders.

“By doing this, we maximise the capacity of our transport fleet and minimise journey

lengths and times. This has delivered substantial efficiencies throughout the logistics process.”

A Scalable Solution

The Barton Meat Company is growing continually and recently opened new headquarters in Manchester. As a result, any technology selected must be fast and simple to deploy in any number of new locations. Because the applications are hosted centrally using a Citrix thin-client model, new sites can be up and running within days.

Barton says: “With Trinity and Microsoft Business Solutions, we have a solution that will grow as we grow. In addition, the system can be deployed rapidly at new site locations with no disruption to our normal business activities.”

Furthermore, the new system can be scaled up quickly to meet surges in customer demand, reduce waiting times, and enhance the overall customer experience both now and in the future.

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