



IMPROVING EFFICIENCY, REVENUE GENERATION AND GROWTH

AT A GLANCE

Company

- Heatmiser - a specialist in domestic and industrial heating control systems.

Solution

- The SAP Business One application, implemented and supported by Signum Solutions.

Benefits

- Streamlined business processes
- Better understanding of customers
- Improved marketing
- Increased revenue
- Improved access to information
- Improved customer service

Company

Based in Darwen in the North of England, Heatmiser is a leading designer, manufacturer and supplier of innovative domestic and industrial heating control systems. The company is the preferred choice among many electrical contractors and original heating equipment manufacturers in the UK and is rapidly expanding into overseas markets.

With a turnover of £1.7m, and sixteen employees, Heatmiser's success is based on its ability to handle small quantities and respond quickly to customer requirements.

Like many small and medium companies, having an online store has been a major contributor to Heatmiser's success and growth. Individuals, and organisations large and small, use Heatmiser's web store to buy the products they want.

An integrated application

However, during 2006, it became clear that the systems Heatmiser was using behind its store were less than efficient. "When customers placed orders with us, they were first of all keyed into the sales order system," says Martyn Kay, Director, Heatmiser. "They then had to be re-keyed into the invoice system. That gave us a high potential for inaccuracies to creep in. In addition, the way the systems worked

made it almost impossible to understand our customers' buying behaviour."

The inefficiencies with the current systems led Heatmiser to look for a new, integrated application. In fact, they had almost decided to purchase a particular system when a chance phone call from Signum Solutions introduced them to the SAP Business One application. Within a week Signum Solutions demonstrated the software at Heatmiser's premises and those who attended were impressed.

Solving problems

"I'd heard of SAP software, but didn't really know much about it," says Martyn. "Signum came in and did a very good demonstration. The people at the company we were considering buying from had done a very flat presentation, showing us the features of their system. Signum was totally different. Its people listened carefully to our problems and showed us exactly how SAP Business One would solve them. By the end of the presentation we were convinced SAP Business One was the software for us."

Two of the key reasons for selecting SAP Business One were the Material Requirements Planning (MRP) module, which included forecasting, and the Customer Relationship Management

SAP BUSINESS ONE SUPPORTS E-COMMERCE AND IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE AT HEATMISER


(CRM) aspects of the system. The third was the drill down capability. "Without searching, you can drill down from anywhere in the software to lower levels," explains Martyn. "We could immediately see how useful that would be, enabling people on the phone to the customer to have all the information they needed available to them. By comparison, the other system looked clunky."

Fast implementation

So impressed were Heatmiser with SAP Business One that they had placed their order within a week of the demonstration, at the beginning of February 2007. On 1st March 2007 it went live.

"I wanted the system to be live on 1st March as it was the beginning of our financial year," explains Martyn. "To add to the complexity we were moving to new offices at the time, but Signum still managed to get it all ready for us by the end of February, so we could enter the data we needed from the old systems. With a few of us doing it, it wasn't a mammoth job."

The original quotation called for fifteen days of consulting. In fact, only seven were used during the implementation period. "The consultants at Signum have been excellent," says Martyn. "As we encounter problems we list them and then go through them with Signum. If we have more urgent issues they are always very quick to respond."



"I AM CONVINCED WE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN SELECTING SAP BUSINESS ONE AND SIGNUM SOLUTIONS," SAYS MARTYN KAY

Big benefits

Heatmiser have already seen major benefits from SAP Business One, aside from the streamlined processes they were hoping to achieve by having an integrated system.

Previously it just wasn't possible to gain an accurate picture of what each customer was purchasing. Today, Heatmiser can - easily. That's helping them increase sales. "Now that we know what customers are buying, we can target them based on their needs," says Martyn. "We can pull all the information we need from SAP Business One and link it to Microsoft Word, to easily print letters and envelopes and create mailshots. We can also do the same for e-mails. I don't have hard evidence that it is increasing sales at the moment, but I am sure it is."

SAP Business One is also making it easier to provide people with information. "With SAP Business One we can easily pull information from it and update Microsoft Excel spreadsheets," Martyn explains. "Consequently, we can let employees have information on a 'need to know' basis, for example by providing stock figures to our sales people. It's simple to do, intuitive for them to use and we don't need to give them direct access to SAP Business One, which saves on license fees. For those using SAP Business One, the drill down facility enables them to find the information they want, when they need it, which increases efficiency and helps us to deliver a better customer service."



A further benefit is the increased visibility of customers' credit status. "Previously the invoice wasn't matched at the time of despatch," says Martyn. "Now we can see if a customer is on stop before we ship the goods. We could never have done that with disjointed systems."

Future plans

Heatmiser's strategy was to get the 'back-end' functions of manufacturing, accounts, sales, stock control and purchasing right, before linking the system up to their web site. But it was always in their mind, as web sales are a big part of the business. However, with the main implementation completed satisfactorily, they are anticipating connecting the two by the end of August 2007. When this is done, Heatmiser will be able to display real-time inventory levels on their web shop and sales orders will automatically flow through to SAP Business One, improving efficiency and customer service even more.

"I always thought SAP was for big companies," says Martyn, summing up. "But my attitude has changed completely. I am convinced we made the right choice in selecting SAP Business One and Signum Solutions, and I would definitely recommend them both to other companies who want to improve their business."

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