



Exhibition experts increase orders by 38% with Microsoft Dynamics CRM™

Access Displays is one of the largest exhibition and display companies in the UK. Following a recent restructure, one part of the business builds large exhibition stands – they're official contractors for the Rugby World Cup, for example – and the other part sells exhibition consumables such as literature stands and showcases. The company has over 3,000 product lines and about 20,000 customers worldwide. With around 20 staff and a turnover in excess of £2.5m, it is a substantial and successful business.

Taming the paper tiger

The company, which was founded in 1990, is growing rapidly but paper-based administration was slowing it down. A single item, costing just £100, required 12 separate pieces of paper, including a quotation, an order, a job sheet, an invoice and a delivery note. Employees were completing each one manually. The error-prone process took a long time. It was also demoralising. Nobody looks forward to a day filling in forms.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0

So, in April 2007, Peter Bowen, the company's CEO, turned to Alliance Systems and asked for help. They recommended Microsoft Dynamics CRM (Customer Relationship Management). They also tailored it to meet Access Displays' processes.

Access Displays looked at other CRM packages but chose Microsoft's because he wanted the value of off-the-shelf software AND the flexibility of a customised program. Microsoft Dynamics CRM seemed to offer the best of both worlds. He also wanted to continue working with Alliance Systems, their IT partner. Quite simply, "We trust them," says Peter.

"We've looked after Access Displays' IT needs for seven years," said David Oxley, MD of Alliance Systems, "and I knew that Microsoft Dynamics CRM would be a good match for them."

Better sales, better service

Dynamics CRM has "increased our volume of business by 38%," says Peter. Looking at the figures on his sales board, it's clear that this increase has been constant since the new software was installed earlier this year.

Thanks to Dynamics CRM, sales people can provide a quotation instantly, even while they are on the phone and before they've finished the call, they can email the quote directly to the customer. This means that inquiries are converted into orders more quickly and more consistently. The system lets them attach pictures of items to the quotes and provide accurate responses to enquiries.

"What differentiates us from our competitors is not price," says Peter, "it's about speed of response and giving customers what they want, when they want it."

The software supports marketing as well as sales. For example, the company sent a mailshot to 20,000 customers. The software let Access Displays target the letters and track the response from different regions and the conversion rate of individual sales people.

In addition, errors have been reduced dramatically. The product names are consistent throughout the system and sales people always quote the right price for the right product from the right supplier. Paperwork has been reduced too because orders are only entered into the system once.

Dynamics CRM has had a hugely positive impact on Access Displays: sales are up, customer service has improved, people – the boss included – spend less time on paperwork and more time on growing the business. Peter concludes, “Dynamics CRM has been a real winner.”

For more information on how Microsoft can help your business check out The Microsoft Small Business Centre at <http://www.microsoft.com/uk/smallbusiness/default.aspx>

Visit Access display’s website at <http://www.accessdisplays.co.uk/>

Visit Alliance Systems website at <http://www.alliance-systems.co.uk/>

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