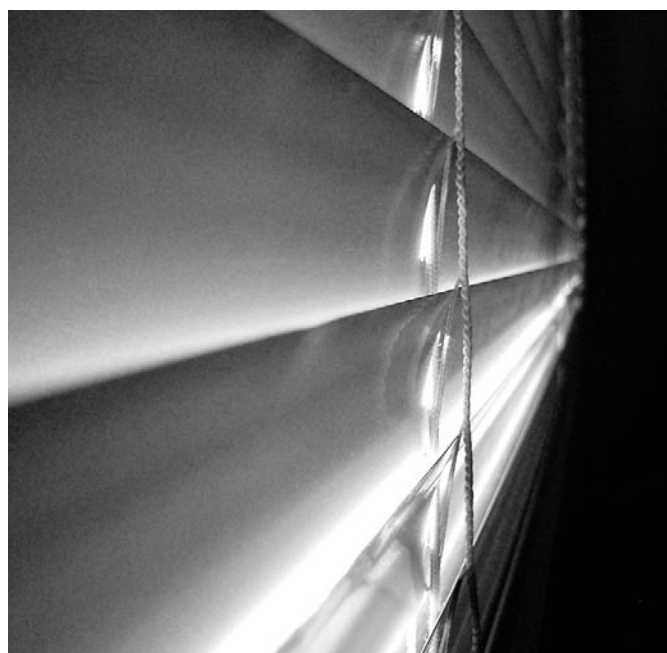


“Delivering our promises to our customers is core to everything we do. Because orders and payment information is uploaded into the ordering system in real-time, the facilitation cycle is reduced by three or four days. As a result, 28 per cent more blinds are fitted on time.”

David Lewis - Director of ICT, Hillarys



The Challenge

Formed in 1971, Hillarys is one of the U.K.’s leading made-to-measure blinds manufacturers with a turnover of more than £85 million (U.S.\$158.87 million) a year and a 23 per cent share of the domestic made-to-measure blinds market. Hillarys employs 800 self-employed advisors who visit customers in their homes to provide guidance on the company’s range of blinds, awnings, and canopies. The advisors take orders and measure up windows. When the blinds have been manufactured, the advisor returns to customers’ homes to fit them. Each week 8,500 orders are processed and 25,000 individual blinds are sold, manufactured, and fitted.

To maintain its market-leading position, Hillarys knew the importance of promising customers a firm delivery date for their blinds. *“As business grows and we evolve, we aim to promise delivery two weeks after an order is placed. But the inefficiencies of our existing system left us with little time to get the product to the customer”* comments David Lewis, Director of ICT, Hillarys.

The old order process of completing a paper form and posting it to head office created at least a four-day delay from the time an order was taken to the time that it was captured at head office where it would then be manually entered onto the system. Because the forms were hand-written, details were sometimes prone to errors and misinterpretation. *“Manual order capturing and processing led to inaccurate information and amounted to more chasing of orders and payment queries than we were happy with,”* says Lewis. *“We process 10,000 orders a week. We had order queries on around 20 per cent of those orders. Considering the average time to resolve a query is four days, it led to large delay.”*

Hillarys recognised that it required a cost-effective solution, integrated with its SAP system which would improve efficiency and accuracy of ordering. The solution also had to be easy to use and should mimic the logical process of Hillarys’ sales cycle.

“Hillarys has been around for 30 years and we have some very established processes. The solution had to be cost-effective. Our advisors are self-employed and have to invest in the technology themselves. We had to come up with a solution that would not price them out of the market and show them real value in their day-to-day process”

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation:
Hillarys Blinds

Service/s Delivered:

Fujitsu’s Mobile Field Force service which connects users in the field to the company’s back office in real time. Users capture data in the field and transmit it wirelessly to the ordering system. Technology includes Microsoft Windows Mobile-based Pocket PC & Microsoft .NET Compact Framework

Key Metrics:

The mobile solution is for Hillarys’ 800 field-based advisors who cover the whole of the UK

Benefits:

- Increased efficiency - field advisors get to their appointments promptly, pricing is more accurate, debit and credit card transactions are more secure, and blinds are fitted on time
- Increased revenue - results from the pilot demonstrated sales opportunities of around £1.1 million (U.S.\$2.05 million) a year as a result of improved accuracy in the pricing of blinds.
- Reduced costs - Hillarys expect to achieve return on investment in the first year of rollout and deliver net cost savings of around £0.25M a year thereon

CASE STUDY HILLARYS BLINDS

The Solution

Fujitsu developed a solution to meet Hillarys' needs, offering real time, two-way communications from a mobile device to the back office, integrating seamlessly with Hillarys' existing SAP ordering system. The solution enables advisors to access their daily schedule on their mobile device. This gives them customer details and the nature of appointments which they then use to schedule visits. "Customer and appointment information, which is gathered centrally in our call centre, is sent to the advisors' devices daily. The automated allocation is based on their location, availability, and specialist skills," says Lewis.

The device intuitively leads the user through the sales process and they can give the customer a quote and print out on a portable printer, and take payment with credit or debit card. The device submits credit card information to the bank for on-the-spot authorisation. The order is sent to the head office in real time, and automatically uploaded into the SAP ordering system, eliminating the need for employees to key in the information from handwritten forms.

Fujitsu used the Microsoft .NET Compact Framework to ease application development and speed up time to market. Sri Rajah Thiyagarajah, Head of SAP Practice, Fujitsu, says: "We worked with the network provider to develop a push system. Whenever there is any activity in the back office, it sends an XML file to the device so that users are always updated."

"Our advisors helped us design the screens, the application flow, and the language used. As a result, the solution mimics the familiar sales process. We aim to complete rollout by the end of 2005, with 700 advisors live on the device, which is 85 per cent of the entire sales force"

David Lewis - Director of ICT, Hillarys

The Benefits

Fujitsu's mobile services have enabled Hillarys to benefit from:

- Increased efficiency and productivity: through the electronic capture of data and its immediate transmission to the ordering system the need for time consuming, unproductive work is dramatically reduced. Better customer service is achieved by field advisors getting to their appointments promptly, pricing is more accurate, debit and credit card transactions are more secure, and blinds are fitted on time. Hillarys has been able to redeploy resources into more productive areas. Queries now being resolved much earlier in the sales cycle has resulted in improved professionalism. If an order changes, the information is automatically uploaded from the device to the back office.

"Business is growing at a rate of 15 per cent a year. This implementation removes negative activity so that we can continue to expand the business without growing the underlying cost base"

- Increased revenue: results from the pilot demonstrated sales opportunities of around £1.1 million (U.S.\$2.05 million) a year as a result of improved accuracy in the pricing of blinds. The system calculates the price automatically, which is more effective than a manual system.

"A further £1.2 million (U.S.\$2.24 million) a year will come from additional quotations that were previously invisible to our specialist telesales team when the level of detail relating to each order was limited"

- Reduced costs: Hillarys expect to achieve return on investment in the first year of rollout and deliver net cost savings of around £0.25M a year thereon. Hillarys has greater visibility of incoming orders and the organisation can more effectively balance income with advertising and direct-labour costs. The increased accuracy of advisors' diary information means fewer wasted journeys and considerably less paperwork for them to complete at the end of each day.

"As the volume of blinds processed using the solution increases, we see savings in a number of key areas, from order processing, to finance, to diary management and distribution"

Our Approach

By combining a detailed understanding of Hillarys' business issues and our expertise in designing and delivering mobile services, Fujitsu provided an innovative solution to meet and exceed our customer's expectations.

Our Expertise

In 30 years of designing, implementing and managing complex business systems, Fujitsu has amassed a wealth of experience in developing mobile workplace solutions that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

Fujitsu's mobile services for the Mobile Professional and Mobile Field Force have been developed according to the TRIOLE and Sense and Respond® approaches. Based on reuse and design for service, TRIOLE means that Fujitsu provides reliable, robust and repeatable solutions that can be deployed quickly and cost-effectively. The Sense and Respond approach enables Fujitsu to deliver continual service improvements, in real-time, at the client interface.

Fujitsu offers a full-spectrum managed mobile service, delivered securely and in real-time. It is device and network independent, easy to use, and offered at a predictable monthly charge.

ASK FUJITSU...

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