

Sage SalesLogix solution fits Sliderobes' Business, with Space to Expand.

Client profile

Sliderobes, an Irish company founded in Belfast and Dublin in 1983, currently employs approximately 250 people. As well as three wholly owned subsidiary factory showcentres in Belfast, Dublin and Birmingham, the company franchises its intellectual property, systems and processes. It has 14 franchise factory showcentres in Great Britain and Ireland, with plans to open another three later this year.

The challenge

Sliderobes' award-winning formula of stylish, high quality wardrobes and storage products, backed by professional design and fitting services led to significant growth in business, with a quadrupling of sales. While delighted with this success, Richard McMullan, Managing Director of Sliderobes, recognised the risk it presented, "Our paper-based systems were struggling to cope with the increase in business. We pride ourselves on our customer service

and take great care to ensure we meet very high standards, so we couldn't let this situation continue."

Recognising that the need for a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was becoming urgent, Sliderobes set about defining its main requirements, as Richard continues: "Firstly, we wanted to improve our management of the customer relationship to keep customers informed at all times as they progress from their first contact with us through to the completion of the installation. Improving our management of customer information was crucial, so that everything could be stored and maintained in one easy-to-access place. We also wanted to automate some of our processes to streamline the work involved, minimise errors and help reduce our overhead costs. At the same time, to maintain control of the business during rapid growth, we needed to improve the quality and timeliness of our management information."

There was another criterion: with ambitions for further expansion, Sliderobes sought a system which would grow with its business and could be used in whichever country franchises were opened.

The solution

In 2004, Sliderobes sent a detailed tender document to eight short-listed suppliers, two of whom provided on-line solutions. Four were invited to present their solutions to the Sliderobes Group Board. After detailed investigation and careful consideration, Sliderobes chose the Sage CRM SalesLogix solution, selecting it for its functionality, scalability and user friendliness.

Pinnacle Computing, a Sage Business Partner based in Belfast, tailored the system to meet Sliderobes' business needs. Richard notes, "In making the system fit our processes and, therefore, extremely easy for staff to use, Pinnacle Computing helped





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Richard McMullan,
Managing Director, Sliderobes

us meet one of key requirements: a smooth change-over process. They produced an excellent system for us and also helped to develop our management reports.”

The benefits

Richard confirms that SalesLogix has had a wide-ranging impact on day-to-day operations: “Our people use the solution for every contact we have with the customer. It has automated the way we record, store and manage customer information from first contact through to the wardrobe installation. Now, no one in the business has to record any management information; the solution automatically provides us with all the significant customer service management information we need and for any timescale we choose to analyse.”

“I don’t think there is a part of the system that we are not using. It makes life easier for us all. Every feature is useful, from the input, storage and easy retrieval of customer information, to the scheduling of tasks and meetings, and the production of letters and other communications for customers.”

All key members of staff have total access to customer and performance information at all times. So, for example, General Managers at the factory showcentres can quickly spot any areas where service is falling short of specified levels and take action immediately. This is a significant step forwards from the previous situation, where a problem would often come to light only with the month-end reports.

In terms of management information, too, Sliderobes has experienced measurable benefits from its SalesLogix solution, as Richard points out: “We have a series of key performance indicators which are monitored daily, weekly and monthly to ensure we are delivering exceptional service. Before the CRM solution was implemented, we collated this information manually at each factory showcase. This was extremely time-consuming, prone to error and required full-time administrators to pull the information together before it could be analysed.”

“Today, in contrast, at head office we have been able to free up one member of staff to undertake a more value added role than simply collating

management information, and we will not need to recruit extra administration staff to deal with our expansion plans. This is reflected across our business network. I estimate that our factory showcentres will be able to increase their business volume by well over 50% without having to employ any extra customer service staff.”

Dominic Totten, Sales & Marketing Manager, notes the quantifiable benefit to his departmental budget, “Advertising can be very expensive, so in investing in campaigns to drive sales, we wished to be able to track which were most successful in order to make best use of our advertising spend. The system has amply met this objective, enabling us to better target marketing and advertising campaigns, and we expect to increase return on advertising by about 10-15%.”

As well as gaining the seal of approval from management, the solution also receives a ringing endorsement from users, as Richard explains, “We surveyed our users after the first three months of implementation and not one wanted to go back to the old system. It just makes their lives so much easier, and enables them to spend time with





Solution Overview

- Customer information recorded, stored and managed from first contact through to wardrobe installation.
- Improved service levels without increased headcount.
- Time previously spent on routine administration released for work of greater value and for customer service.
- CRM support for the company's ambitious growth plans.
- Estimated increase in business volumes by over 50%, with existing staffing levels.
- Return on advertising spend expected to increase by about 10-15%.

customers rather than completing administration tasks, which makes their jobs more enjoyable. So, we've improved both customer satisfaction and job satisfaction, too."

The future

SalesLogix has been extensively tested in Sliderobes' Belfast head office for six months, and the roll-out of the solution, already well under way, will be completed across the franchise network over the next three months.

Richard outlines the plans in place for maximising the value of SalesLogix within the business, "The next steps are to integrate our website with the system, so that customer leads from the website are automatically entered into the CRM solution and assigned to the most relevant showcentre.

This means reduced data entry for staff as they no longer need to re-key the information, and makes for a faster follow-up to the initial show of interest as a brochure is sent on the day the request is received."

"We also intend to integrate SalesLogix with our accounting software to reduce double entry of sales information, payments etc, and hence save administration time and increase accuracy. In keeping with our commitment to customer service, we also plan to be able to extract information automatically from our CAD system into the customer profile, so that our customer service team have an in-depth view of the customer's purchase to make query resolution much simpler and quicker."

Sliderobes continues its strategy of expansion, with the challenging goal of virtually doubling the number of factory showcentres to thirty before 2010. In SalesLogix, it has a CRM system that can effectively support this continued growth.

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