

IRIS Exchequer improves sales, dispatch, delivery and customer service for Claremont & May

Home fragrance producer, Claremont & May's investment in finance and management solution, IRIS Exchequer has delivered enhanced stock and sales visibility, reduced dispatch lead times, improved delivery accuracy and enhanced customer relationships.

Combined with the ability to automatically produce product and fulfilment information in several European languages, these improvements have resulted in a doubling of sales in Europe within 12 months.

European expansion in home fragrance

Claremont & May is Europe's leading producer of home fragrance products. The company sells a range of goods such as fragranced oils and scented candles to supermarkets, department stores, garden centres and independent retailers. In addition to own brand products, the company produces privately branded goods for both supermarkets and department stores.

Since its foundation in 1991, Claremont & May has experienced significant growth in the booming home fragrance market and now employs over 120 people. Expansion has also been significant in Europe with sales to France, Germany, Luxemburg and Holland showing significant growth.

The rapid expansion placed significant pressures on an IT infrastructure based originally on an AS/400 based system. The need for frequent modifications and a huge demand for new reports were adding a significant financial burden to Claremont & May. As Malcolm Parker, IT Manager, explains, "The AS/400 system was expensive to maintain and upgrade which created a major challenge in a fast moving business.

Each new report represented a significant cost to the business. With ambitious plans for European expansion it was evident that Claremont & May needed to invest in a more flexible, responsive and intuitive IT solution."

Excellent functionality

Having reviewed the market, Claremont & May opted for IRIS Exchequer. "IRIS Exchequer is, without a doubt, the most easy to use financial solution in the market," Parker says, "This user-friendliness was key for Claremont & May since many people in the company had never used a computer before. IRIS Exchequer's highly customisable screens are a significant advantage and really boost usability."

He adds, "IRIS Exchequer's multi-currency functionality was essential to support our European business, while the paperless technology offered clear opportunities for efficiency improvements throughout the company."

The implementation of IRIS Exchequer was project managed by the accredited IRIS Exchequer team. Data conversion was managed via an import module into IRIS Exchequer - a process that took only one weekend.

"The team handled the process very efficiently," says Parker. "Furthermore they delivered a broad range of training courses from Microsoft Office to 4 day IRIS Exchequer courses for management to meet our diverse user requirements."

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CLAREMONT
& MAY
fragrance
& home



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The company has a 24 concurrent user-license, which it plans to extend in the near future, with users spread across the company from sales and dispatch to senior management. Furthermore, Claremont & May has used IRIS Exchequer's SDK (Software Developers Kit) to develop new stock control modules that utilise hand held barcode devices to integrate seamlessly with IRIS Exchequer. The developer's kit leverages Microsoft's COM (Component Object Model) technology to provide an industry standard platform for integration, customisation and reporting.

Improved sales

A key benefit from the investment in IRIS Exchequer has been the ease with which Claremont & May can now manage its biannual product price change. With many of its 500 products subject to as many as 7 different price structures based on volume of sales, distribution channel and currency, each price change affects as many as 3,000 prices. In the past, this process took up to 100 hours. Now, using spreadsheet and modern technology links the changes can be loaded into IRIS Exchequer in minutes.

"We also have complete information visibility," he says. "The sales team can immediately see the prices for each customer and can export those prices to the customer if required." "Critically, information on products is now also available in local language versions. Stock information is stored in English and automatically converted to Dutch, German or French for orders and sales confirmations using IRIS Exchequer's alternate stock database. "The result has been a significant improvement in customer relationships that has seen sales double to these European countries in the past year," Parker confirms.

Enhanced efficiency

Claremont & May are using IRIS Exchequer's paperless technology to improve the efficiency of the sales process. Faxed or posted orders are scanned and saved into IRIS Exchequer by account code, ensuring all orders are visible and have an accurate, up to date audit trail. "One major benefit of this technology is our ability to report information to our agents about their sales and commission via email or fax. Indeed, the use of IRIS Exchequer's paperless technology saves the company at least £5,000 annually," he says.

The paperless technology is also used to distribute IRIS Exchequer reports throughout the organisation.

Effective dispatch

The company is also leveraging its barcode system and hand held devices to produce automated picking lists for dispatch - replacing the manual process that relied on the experience of dispatch personnel. Now IRIS Exchequer analyses goods on order and goods in the warehouse and creates a picking list to ensure most efficient product distribution.

The system can also be used to prioritise certain customers, countries or market areas, dependent on company policy. "In the past, dispatch personnel were provided with hundreds of picking lists representing thousands of orders and had to decide what deliveries were possible each day. Now the process is automated, efficient and closely aligned with corporate policy. Lead times have been significantly reduced and we can prioritise orders effectively," he says.

The ability to tailor screens to individual user roles has enabled the company to introduce new warehouse personnel to the system without training.

"This is a major cost saving in an area that typically has a degree of staff turnover," says Parker. "This ease of use combined with automated picking lists has enabled Claremont & May to improve productivity and accuracy by 50%. In addition to contributing significantly to the bottom line, this efficiency has been recognised by customers who can now enjoy faster product dispatch."

Online business plans

The company's next goal is to leverage IRIS Exchequer's eBusiness solution to provide customers with secure, online access to their account to view stock levels, order goods and monitor delivery schedules. "Online ordering will represent a huge financial benefit for both Claremont & May and our customers, and deliver a significant service improvement," Michael says.

He concludes, "The investment in IRIS Exchequer was the best IT decision Claremont & May has ever made. The entire investment has cost less than Y2K compliance on our previous product and delivered huge benefits from increased sales and improved customer relationships, to reduced lead times and accurate dispatch.

Furthermore, with IRIS's frequent delivery of upgrades to IRIS Exchequer, I am confident that Claremont & May has invested in a product that will continue to support our business expansion in both the UK and Europe."

To see how other organisations are benefiting from implementing IRIS Exchequer please visit www.iris.co.uk/exchequercasestudies

Solutions that deliver



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