Case Study: Hozelock

Fully managed, outsourced solution delivers improved quality of service to customers

In 2007, Hozelock identified the need for an electronic trading solution which would enable the company to respond quickly to customer requests. Hozelock elected to outsource their electronic trading requirements to Wesupply, allowing them to react quickly and efficiently to their customers electronic trading mandates.

Background and Challenges

Hozelock are a manufacturer of garden equipment, with a reputation for innovation, quality and good value. Based in Birmingham, UK, Hozelock has a comprehensive range of products that cover garden watering, garden pressure sprayers, and pond equipment.

Prior to 2007, Hozelock had been electronically exchanging invoices and orders with its customers for over 20 years, using an on premise, third party EDI solution. However, the company was finding it increasingly difficult to accommodate forever changing customer requirements. Each time there was a change in a customer requirement, the solution needed to be reconfigured by Hozelock's IT department. It was felt that this was an unnecessary drain on resources that would be best used elsewhere.

The fact that *OneTime*™ is an outsourced solution was an important factor in Hozelock's decision making process as it means that they require no hardware, software, database, integration tools nor do they need to invest in major internal project teams or maintenance. In addition, Wesupply already had connections into most of Hozelock's customers which allowed for a quick and low risk transition.

"Our existing solution lacked flexibility to meet the changing requirements of our customers and it could not easily support non standard requirements and new technologies. As a result, the lead time for adapting to new requirements or on boarding a new customer was lengthy", explained Trevor Austin, Director of IT at Hozelock.

The Solution

Hozelock implemented Wesupply's fully managed B2B electronic trading solution, *OneTime*, to rapidly respond to its customers electronic trading mandates, while freeing up valuable IT resources. *OneTime* has played a critical part in helping Hozelock meet the service levels targets set by its customers.

The *OneTime* solution was integrated with Hozelock's ERP system, which was another important factor in the decision-making process. The solution seamlessly integrates into the company's back office system, enabling files to be imported and exported directly to and from customers.

"The *OneTime* solution has enabled us to react quickly and efficiently to our customers requirements, without tying up our IT team", commented Trevor Austin, Director of IT at Hozelock.

Initially the company was using the solution to communicate with nine customers, and this has now been extended to sixteen. Some of the additional customers that are now using the solution have non-standard requirements, which would have proved to be particularly difficult to accommodate with the company's legacy system, however with *OneTime*, Wesupply handled the complete on boarding process, allowing the IT team to focus on their core responsibilities. It was this ability to easily add new message types and customers that led to the decision to outsource their electronic trading to Wesupply.

"Wesupply's fully managed, outsourced solution has removed the complexities of electronic trading from Hozelock, enabling the company to focus on the core objectives of their business" commented Jerry Quinn, Industry Director at Wesupply.

Benefits

OneTime has allowed Hozelock to consolidate their current customers onto a single EDI platform whilst also allowing them to meet electronic trading mandates from new customers without the need to develop, maintain and support an internal integration/mapping solution.

Hozelock now connects to sixteen of its major customers through Wesupply, which accounts for 70% of the company's UK turnover. It is the company's aim to eventually connect with all their customers using OneTime.

Hozelock has realised many business benefits as a result of outsourcing their EDI requirements to Wesupply:

- Rapid response to changing customer requirements
- Reduction in manual order entry errors
- Improved customer service levels across the customer base
- Reduced IT costs
- Rapid and efficient on-boarding of new customers
- Ability to support non standard customer requirements and new technologies

Viewpoint

"The *OneTime* solution has enabled us to react quickly and efficiently to our customers requirements, without tying up our IT team."

Trevor Austin, Director of IT at Hozelock.

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