

CASE STUDY

CLIENT: Hogans Wholesale

INDUSTRY: Wholesale

LOCATION: Australia

PRODUCT SUITE: EXO Business

MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER: Indivia

Real-time, snapshot information on sales and stock gives NSW glass and aluminium wholesaler a clearer view of business.

Overview

Smithfield-based Hogan's Wholesale has been serving the glass and aluminium industry since 1981. The company was founded on the principle of taking tools and equipment to the customer, and door-to-door sales remain a key part of the business to this day. Only now – instead of a single truck – Hogans has a fleet of fully-stocked delivery vehicles servicing Sydney, Newcastle, Central Coast, Wollongong, South Coast and Canberra.

Expansion has been good for business, but with drivers out on the road for up to a week at a time, visibility on sales and stock has been restricted. And this has put unnecessary pressure on the entire sales order process. Until now ...

Tec 5 not technical enough

For 14 years, Hogans had been using Tec 5 – specialist software for timber and glass resellers and wholesalers needing a double discount system.

“It was easy to get to grips with and pretty user friendly,” says Michelle Kelly, Office Manager at Hogans, “but as an old system, Tec 5 wasn't really set up to manage sales or inventory in real time. Support was lacking too,” she admits.

So Hogans started looking at alternative systems.

Making sure the support is there from the start

“We considered Attache,” says Michelle, “but it was aimed more at retail sales – and that didn't suit us”.

On the recommendation of a supplier, Hogans started talking to MYOB implementation partner Indivia about MYOB EXO Business. Four weeks later, they had chosen to go with the MYOB system.

“Price always plays a factor in these sorts of decisions,” says Michelle, “but knowing we'd be properly supported after installation was a bigger deal. To us, it was really important to have an organisation like Indivia at our disposal.”

Early configurations and testing

To start with, Indivia used a mock-up of Hogans' configuration to explain how EXO could be customised to improve work flow and visibility.

They then set up a trial version of EXO, so that by go-live, the glass and aluminium business would be familiar with their new business management system. Even so, Hogans were apprehensive about the switch.

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"It's fair to say we were all a little nervous about that first day of going live," says Michelle – "but we needn't have been".

The switch

During the switch, Indivia had two staff on site at Hogans to keep an eye on things. According to Michelle, they had everything under control.

"They stayed as long as we needed them to," she says, "which was very supportive. In fact, they've continued to be supportive to this day".

According to Indivia's Lisa Smith, however, it wasn't all down to them.

"The fact that the implementation went so smoothly is thanks, in no small part, to staff at Hogans being so positive about the new system," she says.

"When clients are like that, it makes such a difference."

Meeting the needs of a mobile workforce

Because Hogans have such a large, mobile workforce, they needed certain specific functionality from EXO.

"Hogans' trucks are, in essence, mobile warehouses," says Michelle – "and they can be out on the road for up to a week. Under the previous system, short of each driver carrying out regular manual checks, we'd have to wait until the trucks returned to base at the weekend to carry out stock takes."

This wasn't just inconvenient. Out on the road, salesmen were essentially blind. With no up to date data on the stock they were hauling, they had no real way of knowing whether they'd be able to fulfill customer orders until they started unpacking the truck."

That lack of visibility, of course, filtered all the way through the organisation to HQ, where there was a real pressure to reorder and restock the right products in time.

Real time, any time data

With EXO however, it couldn't be more different.

As soon as a sale is made, the driver logs that information in EXO on a laptop and the system is updated there and then. Not only can the driver see exactly what stock he or she is carrying and knows which products are available to customers – so too can head office. Instead of waiting until the truck returns to base, stock can be ordered in advance, well in time for the next week's deliveries.

According to Indivia's Lisa Smith, Saving time and effort at weekends was a big issue for Hogans, and having real-time visibility on sales has enabled them to do that.

But it's not just restocking that EXO has improved. Being able to rely on up-to-date data means that any decision taken at Hogans is now an informed decision – thanks to EXO's clear reporting.

Better visibility all round

Michelle says they look at sales reports the most, "because they allow us to see how we're travelling for the month".

The best thing about EXO's reports is that you don't have to spend hours looking at them. With a clear user interface, it's easy just to dip in and get a snapshot of data – which, she says, "is exactly what you want out of a business management system.

"It's useful to have the detailed data, of course," says Michelle – "but when you're running a business, you don't want your head buried in lines of figures".

Client and Enterprise partner details

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