Fruit Wholesaler Forms Fresh Take on B2B

Poupart reacts swiftly to customer needs with shorter order processing cycle through OpenText™ Trading Grid

Poupart Limited is a UK-based fruit wholesaler with roots tracing back to the mid-1850s. The company, divided into crop-specific groups—BerryWorld and Poupart Produce—supplies quality citrus, cherries, grapes and a host of other products to leading UK and European supermarkets and also the non-retail sector.

Competitive Strain on Supplier Systems

Like many successful companies, the key to Poupart’s achievement is its proven ability to move quickly to take advantage of significant opportunities and also to address potential challenges.

Poupart’s business is positively impacted by significant shifts in consumer behavior, such as:

- Economic downturn encourages more people to eat at home.
- An increased emphasis on healthy eating boosts the purchase of fresh produce.

In order to meet the new demands for its range of products, Poupart required a scalable B2B infrastructure to support steady growth as it expanded the range of supermarket groups with which it does business.

At the same time, not all changes in the external environment are as positive. Continuing fierce competition between the supermarkets has led to pressure on margins across the food supplier sector, while the growing emphasis on promotions and offers puts stress and strain on suppliers’ systems. Meanwhile, the rising price of fuel is not ideal for a company that imports from abroad.

Because of the nature of the goods it sells, Poupart has additional challenges that require the company to react quickly. For example, produce such as fruit and vegetables are highly perishable with a typical shelf life of only three days. This means Poupart has to turn around orders as soon as possible. For an order received in the morning, the goal is to have the order ready for collection by 4 p.m. the same afternoon.

As a reaction to the challenge, Poupart was keen to cut out any unnecessary costs from its supply chain wherever possible. Poupart was on the lookout for additional efficiencies, looking to automate key business processes and, if possible, accelerate and shorten their time-to-market cycle.

INDUSTRY

Food Services

CUSTOMER

Poupart Limited

CHALLENGES

- Trends boost fresh produce demand
- Fierce competition thins margins, strains supplier systems
- Nature of product requires short time-to-market cycles

SOLUTIONS

- OpenText™ “Trading Grid”

BENEFITS

- Swift response to customer needs with shorter order cycles
- Business agility and growth, even during economic recession
Efficient Electronic Trading with Supermarkets

Poupart is focused on the supermarkets that represent 90 percent of its business. Finding a way to trade efficiently and easily with the major groups is critical. The company implemented a robust B2B infrastructure that can deal with the challenges of these customers and efficiently manage the different kinds of orders arriving from customers, including weekly, provisional, final, and amended orders.

With a secure VPN (virtual private network) desktop connection to services on the OpenText™ Trading Grid™ for the UK, Poupart exchanges documents and data with its trading partners without disrupting business processes. Trading Grid helps to shield Poupart from complexity. For example, the Asda supermarket group uses AS2 so, rather than increasing the complexity on its systems, Poupart outsources this requirement to OpenText. The same applies to an X400 connection required to trade with the European Metro Group. Trading Grid provides visibility and process controls that allow Poupart to react immediately to unforeseen challenges, and reduce personnel time spent tracking and troubleshooting.

Customer Service and Business Agility with Shorter Cycles

Poupart deployed OpenText solutions to help the company become an Active Business. In particular, the company can very quickly adapt to changes in customer needs among the supermarket groups. OpenText helps Poupart sustain a business model that depends on sourcing from distant geographies while maintaining the ability to react as swiftly as possible to local market demand.

The most tangible evidence of success is that Poupart’s business has continued to grow, even at a time when the economic environment was at its most challenging. The company has enjoyed what Robert Hamilton, Infrastructure Manager at Poupart, describes as the benefits of speed: “We have been able to automate with no re-keying required. The main benefit to the business is that we have been able to shorten the order processing cycle, which has helped us to react more quickly to customer requirements and become a more agile business as a result.”

Poupart continues to expand the number of supermarkets it does business with, and now includes among its customers some of the top supermarket chains in the U.K.