

POUPART

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Poupart

Corporate Profile

A Dynamic Fruit Wholesaler

Poupart is a fast-growing UK based fruit wholesaler. Turnover in 2009 was just short of £260 million.

The company has six divisions, BerryWorld (set up in 1994) for soft fruits, OrchardWorld (1989) for top-fruit, Poupart Citrus (1987) for citrus and Norton Folgate (acquired in 2007) for cherries and stone fruit. A fifth division Poupart Imports supplies a wide range of products to the non-retail sector. Based in Hertfordshire, with trading offices in Spain and Surrey, the Poupart Group has recently made its first move into continental Europe with the formation of VitalBerry BV, a joint venture between three international operating companies.

Business Challenge

A Changing Business Environment

Like many successful companies, the key to Poupart's achievement is that the company has proved its ability to move quickly to take advantage of significant opportunities and also to address potential challenges.

Poupart's business has been positively impacted by two significant shifts in consumer behaviour. The severity of the economic recession has encouraged many more people to eat at home. In parallel, an increased emphasis on healthy eating has encouraged the purchase of more fresh produce.

These macro trends have helped stimulate demand for Poupart's range of products. A prime requirement, therefore, for Poupart is a scalable B2B infrastructure to allow Poupart to continue to grow, steadily and expand 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 stresses and strains on a supplier's systems. Meanwhile, the price of fuel has gone inexorably upwards—not good news for a company that imports from abroad.

As a reaction to the challenge, the company was keen to cut out any unnecessary costs from their 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.

A significant further challenge for Poupart is inherent in the nature of the goods it sells. Cherries, for example, are highly perishable with a typical shelf life of only three days. The life of berries is not that much longer. This means that the company needs to be able to react quickly, aiming to turn round orders as soon as possible. For an order received in the morning, the goal is to have the order ready for collection by four o'clock the same afternoon.



The Solution

Electronic Trading with Supermarkets

Poupart is very focused on the supermarkets that represent 90 percent of its business. Finding a way to trade efficiently and easily with the major groups has been critical.

The company has now put in place 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.

The company has a secure VPN (Virtual Private Network) desktop connection to services on the GXS Trading Grid® for the UK. This means the company can exchange documents and data with its trading partners without disrupting business processes. GXS 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 GXS. The same applies to an X400 connection required to trade with the European Metro Group. GXS Trading Grid provides visibility and process controls that allow Poupart to react immediately to unforeseen challenges, and reduce personnel time spent tracking and troubleshooting.

The Results

Speeding the Order Processing Cycle

Poupart has deployed GXS 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. And GXS 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 has been at its most challenging.

The company has enjoyed what Robert Hamilton, Poupart's infrastructure manager, 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 has continued to expand the number of supermarkets it does business with, and now includes among its customers Asda, Co-op, Costco, M&S, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, and Waitrose.



About GXS

GXS is a leading global provider of B2B e-commerce solutions that simplify and enhance business process integration and collaboration among trading partners. Organisations worldwide, including more than 70 percent of the Fortune 500, leverage the on-demand services on GXS Trading Grid® to extend supply chain networks, optimise product launches, automate warehouse receiving, manage electronic payments and gain supply chain visibility. GXS Managed Services, GXS' B2B outsourcing solution, empowers customers with the expertise, technical infrastructure and program support to conduct B2B e-commerce with trading partners globally. Based in Gaithersburg, Md., GXS has an extensive global network and has local offices in the Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific regions. GXS can be found on the Web at www.gxs.eu.

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