

SalesLOGIX[®]

Success Story

Focus on Customer Service with SalesLogix

'The system gives us information about sales trends for a type of carpet or a specific range, which allows representatives to plan sales initiatives and promotions with each customer. We are the only people in the carpet industry providing this service. This gives us enormous competitive advantage.' *Steve Higgins, Sales Director, Stoddard International.*

BENEFITS

- Enhances customer satisfaction and ensures that carpet retailers perceive Stoddard as being their most professionally equipped Business Partner.
- Empowers sales representatives to be more effective and increases the profitability of each account.
- Provides seamlessly shared customer information across sales managers, allowing the company to configure services to meet carpet retailers' individual needs.
- Supports rapid, consistent, and accurate reporting for better decision-making.
- Increases staff productivity and generates cost efficiencies.

CUSTOMER SUMMARY

Stoddard International

In the carpet world, the name Stoddard reigns supreme. With a history and experience stretching back over 160 years, it is now Scotland's oldest and largest carpet manufacturing company. Stoddard is the proud bearer of Her Majesty's Royal Warrant granted in 1966.

Industry

Commercial & Manufacturing

Challenge

Stoddard wanted a robust, sales automation solution to boost client service and achieve competitive edge.

Solution Summary

- Deployment of SalesLogix sales automation system
- Touchstone provided software configuration, systems integration, help desk support and end user training

Stoddard International, the prestigious carpet manufacturer, recognised the need to move even closer to its retailers to ensure they receive unprecedented service. Steve Higgins, Sales Director at Stoddard, explains: "We wanted to demonstrate to the carpet retailers that we are a forward thinking

company; one that understands their market, and the criteria upon which their customers choose carpets."

"We felt we could best achieve this if our sales people were equipped with a correct view of each of their retail accounts."

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By introducing a sales force automation solution, we believed that we would become better at discussing our clients' needs and servicing our retail accounts."

The company had traditionally relied on paper-based systems to share important sales information, manage sales strategies and provide after-sales service and support. "Retailers will often phone with queries and it is an obvious benefit to be totally up-to-date with their business position," says Higgins. We previously had to call head office and someone there would have to access a variety of sources before we could answer their query."

"In the normal course of events, the sales team would have to service and support their accounts using paper-based monthly reports. The further you got in to each month, the more out-of-date the information was."

To find the right sales automation tool, Stoddard turned to IT Services Group, Touchstone. SalesLogix software was chosen because it fitted uniquely around Stoddard's business processes.

The two companies set about defining how to configure SalesLogix to best meet Stoddard's requirements. The first stage was to talk to the sales force. "We wanted to involve the sales team as much as possible. We had to make sure we won their enthusiasm so we asked them to define their ideal system. We then set about configuring SalesLogix to meet their needs exactly," says Higgins.

Touchstone and Stoddard configured the SalesLogix system in line with the identified requirements and developed links and interfaces with existing information systems. The result is a comprehensive sales database. "We worked closely with Touchstone to see how SalesLogix could best meet our detailed list of requirements. I have to say Touchstone and SalesLogix delivered 100% and more!" says Higgins.

Touchstone provided invaluable training and support during rollout. "It was important that the sales people received training and hit the ground running and although the system is intuitive, our sales force were newcomers to this technology," says Higgins. "We were very pleased with the training we received from Touchstone. The consultants were very knowledgeable and professional."

SalesLogix runs on both laptops and desktop PCs. Information is extracted daily from a variety of sources within

the back office MRP system and passed to SalesLogix. Remote laptop systems synchronise their data regularly via a dial up connection. SalesLogix provides Stoddard with a single source of information about the organisation, no matter where they are located.

As a result, SalesLogix supports Stoddard in providing their retailers with exceptional service. "The sales team is better equipped to shorten sales cycles, increase the value of each customer transaction and provide focused information about the status of an order," says Higgins.

A big part of Stoddard's drive to 'add value' to the retail managers' business is to support them with the right strategic business expertise. Unlike its competitors, Stoddard is able to analyse historical business patterns and accurately forecast future business. "The system gives us information about sales trends for a type of carpet or a specific range, which allows representatives to plan sales initiatives and promotions with each customer," says Higgins. "We are the only people in the carpet industry providing this service. This gives us enormous competitive advantage."

By providing comprehensive business profiles to their retailers, Stoddard's sales force is able to create personalised services for customers. As a result, retail managers receive an improved service. "Our retailers value the information we provide and appreciate the professional presentation of that information," says Higgins. The system also insulates retailers from disruptions that might otherwise occur when a sales person moves on or changes roles. Having a history of all the contacts with enquiries from that retailer safeguards Stoddard's value to the retailer and vice versa. The system's depth of information plus its ease of use means that should a salesperson be off sick, someone else can easily deputise. "If a territory manager is away on holiday or ill, any manager is in a position to field any question," says Higgins.

SalesLogix provides a comprehensive view of all of its retail managers' activities, which can be shared seamlessly between its sales management team. As a result, management reporting has become more effective. "One of my roles is looking for ways of developing business," explains Higgins. "In SalesLogix, important information stands out more clearly and quickly, allowing us to spot important sales trends and respond accordingly."

One important driver for introducing SalesLogix was its integration with other systems. This allowed the transfer of information electronically and error-free. Sales people used to set up promotions with retail managers, transfer the terms to paper and distribute it through the mail system to the invoicing system in head office. This led to delays and subsequent administrative costs and service issues. Higgins comments: "Previously, promotions were agreed, but retail managers were often charged at the non-discounted price, due to administrative delay. With SalesLogix, any promotional discount is transferred automatically into the back office system appearing on an invoice raised the following day. The number of credit notes and the associated administrative effort has been dramatically reduced."

Higgins continues "Keeping tabs on the location and condition of point of sale used to be another problem because we used to update records at head office manually. Thanks to SalesLogix, this is now a thing of the past."

Although it has in the region of 2,000 retailers, Stoddard works most intensively with just a small percentage. For Stoddard, personal contact is a prerequisite for success. The company's objective is to move even closer to its key retailers and to use SalesLogix to manage telesales calls to other accounts. Detailed records and automated procedures within the SalesLogix system help ensure calls happen on time. "Sales office staff will make regular three monthly telephone calls to our smaller customers. SalesLogix will set this as a recurring action and record results," says Higgins. "This is about time management - it frees up the sales team to service their more lucrative accounts more profitably."

Touchstone and SalesLogix have helped Stoddard improve its responsiveness to its carpet retailers and maximise the sales potential of each and every account. In addition, Stoddard's business processes are now more streamlined. "Now we have the tools to target our selling. The overall savings to the company have been dramatic - less errors, less administration and better service," says Higgins. He adds, "We have a very good working relationship with Touchstone. I was delighted that they were able to deliver on everything we wanted - and more."

Sage CRM Solutions Ltd, Sage House, Wharfedale Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 5RD, Tel: 0118 927 0100 Fax: 0118 927 0608, www.sagecrm.com

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