



'The software that they designed made a massive difference to the business. Jobs that were taking 2 days now takes minutes! Hooray!'

Nicola Searle - Assistant FD, Delta Music Ltd

The Business

The Delta Music group has over three decades of experience in delivering home entertainment products to markets around the world.

Delta Music plc is the UK arm of the company - which also has operations in Germany and the USA - and it has long been established as a supplier of top class audio and visual home entertainment products. Their producers, engineers and designers, use state-of-the-art digital technology to create the best looking and best sounding products on the market.

Their extensive catalogue of CDs boast a wide range of genres including classical, pop, rock, jazz and new age, and has made them one of the leaders in their field. Their DVD catalogue has also grown dramatically over the last five years and offers a wide selection of TV programmes, children's, special interest, documentaries, music, classic film, and exclusive content.

In the UK Delta Music's products are sold into multiple stores such as HMV, Virgin and WH Smith and have a dedicated team of merchandisers that are responsible for helping retailers maximize sales by regularly servicing and updating each outlet with new stock. Delta operates from offices, and 40,000 sq. ft of warehousing, located in the South of London and as well as serving retail and wholesale accounts, they also provide a bespoke racking service, namely Delta Music Merchandising (DMM) for a number of clients. Delta's continuing goal is to develop new and exciting products for the entertainment marketplace in order to serve their customers' needs.

The Challenge

Each merchandiser is assigned a designated area to manage which they must service regularly. At the beginning of the day calls were scheduled and are based on a cycle of 2 weeks for low turnover outlets and up to twice a week for high

turnover outlets.

At the time Delta were using profiles to represent the merchandise in the racks. At this point the merchandiser was using a manual profile sheet for each rack. From this manual profile sheet the merchandiser had to calculate how much of the aforementioned merchandise (cd's tapes, DVD's etc) had been sold.

From this information the merchandiser was also to conduct manual stock auditing procedure calculations such as maximum quantity per rack and also re-order levels and varying demand trends by product(s).

On average one order was producing 11 order sheets that then had to be finalised upon completion by another daily call report, outlining the different items of stock that had been sold that day. Once this report had been collated it was the merchandiser's responsibility to then fax or dispatch the form via mail to head office.



With a single merchandiser visiting approximately 7 outlets per day the above paper based reporting format was both an administration and a data input burden. As a day of the existing method resulted in head office receiving approximately 825 pages of manual data that had to be inputted each evening onto the central database system manually.

Some other problems faced during a typical day are summarized below:

- Delays in receiving the blank Profile forms from head office.
- Logistical issues at head office in regards to sending new profile forms to mobile staff.
- Typical problems relating to manual form filling i.e., lost paper work, incorrect order quantities etc.
- Collating information at the end of the working day could take an additional 2 hours to summarise correctly.
- Escalating telephony costs in faxing an average of 55 sheets at the end of the day.
- Head office receiving on a daily basis 55 sheets from up to 15 merchandisers resulting in 825 pages that required manually sorting and entering onto the centralised database.
- All of the above resulting in lengthy order turnaround at Deltas' expense.
- Un-authorized returns of products which also lacked any accompanying paper work.

The Solution

Portech have presented Delta Music with their m-sales mobile solution with Windows mobile computers. The bespoke software has been tailored to mimic the profile concept, considerably reducing the amount of problematic paperwork.

The simple user friendly system requires the merchandiser to work down the profile on the screen merely entering the quantity of merchandise found in the racks and the customised software generates an order by profile.

The daily call sheet is sort by price and effectively summarized at the touch of a button eliminating the ever time consuming process of manual calculations.

m-sales have enabled Delta Music to control re-

turns more effectively by restricting profiles for which items can be returned. This has eliminated the returns of items which are not allowed to be sent back to Delta Music by the retailer. The returns process ends with the printing of a detailed summary which is sent back with the returned items allowing the warehouse staff to reconcile the details with the central database.

Another vital component of m-sales utilised by the merchandisers is the stock take functionality. The merchandiser can carry out a stock take on the fly while visiting the retailers which in turn gives a snap shot back at base of the stock levels at the shops.

The merchandiser effortlessly connects the mobile computer to the telephone line, thus connecting to the central database and downloads the necessary information. During this session any updates such as profiles or new customers are downloaded automatically onto the mobile computer. And all collected data during the day such as sales orders and stock information are uploaded from the mobile computer. Another benefit of the solution was the facility for the mobile workers to send and receive emails via the mobile computer, something which was not available before.

Data received back at the server end is automatically integrated into the companies account package hence allowing the swift production of invoices and management reports and hence removing the need of additional manual data entry into the central database.

Conclusion

Having moved away from paper based formats Delta Music now enjoy a tailor made mobile solution, eliminating the tedious ineffective disadvantages in which the manual system created. With all the information from the mobile computer automatically updating Delta's accounts system, staff moral and productivity has increased with the company operating more efficiently and cost effectively. This sentiment being relayed by Nicola Searle – Assistant FD Delta Music Ltd who said *"The software that they designed made a massive difference to the business. Jobs that were taking 2 days now take 15minutes! Hooray!"*