



Grafton Gourmet

Driving Business Growth By Improving IT Performance

Auckland-based fresh food wholesaler Grafton Gourmet relies on technology to effectively service more than 20,000 customers and manage its financial systems. However, a poorly performing network and incompatible software were severely restricting the growth of the business. Four months after implementing a Microsoft and HP technology package, Grafton Gourmet increased its sales by approximately 30 per cent, reduced its administration headcount from three to one, and transformed its customer service.

When Managing Director Mike Dorn bought Grafton Gourmet over a year ago, he inherited what he called a “chaotic IT system” that affected his ability to service customers effectively and efficiently.

“The technology we had in place was hindering our growth. We had a Linux server that was difficult to administer and provided a poor network set up, preventing us from making the improvements we needed,” says Dorn.

“Whenever we wanted to change something, we had to pay a Linux specialist to do what we should have been able to do ourselves.”

Modernising the Business with Help from Microsoft and HP

At the beginning of 2006, the fresh food wholesaler won \$20,000 worth of hardware and software through the Small Business No More Pain Competition run by Microsoft New Zealand and Hewlett Packard. Dorn says finding an efficient way to manage the growth of his business was the primary motivation behind his entry.

“We desperately wanted to modernise our business and believed technology was the key to helping us grow by providing better levels of customer service and more efficient document management.”

Working with IT partner SoftSource, the company has implemented the new technology in all areas of its business.

Increase Sales by 30% in Four Months

When Dorn received the technology package he saw an opportunity to achieve his dream of doubling the size of the business over the next 18 months. He is pleased to say the company is well on the way to exceeding this target.

“In the past four months since implementing the Microsoft technology we have increased our sales by approximately 30% because we have been able to focus on the value-add of the business.”

Solution Overview

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Mike Dorn
Owner/
Managing Director
Grafton Gourmet

Customer Profile

Grafton Gourmet prepares and dresses fresh chicken and meat products in both traditional and innovative ways. The fresh food wholesaler delivers to businesses and homes across the North Island.

Web Site

www.graftongourmet.co.nz

Industry

Manufacturing and Distribution

Scenario

Accessibility; End-user Productivity; Internal Document Management; Mobility

Customer Size

Small

Business Situation

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Solution Summary

Grafton Gourmet received a comprehensive package of

Time to Work 'On' the Business Instead of 'In' the Business

With the technology working smoothly Dorn and his team have more time during the day to focus on customers and growing the business.

"It has allowed us to go out and spend time with our customers instead of maintaining the computer systems. Previously, just setting up a new printer took a lot of time."

Better Decision Making Ability

Prior to implementing the Microsoft and HP technology, keeping track of the financial health of the company was difficult with a number of disjointed accounting packages that did not work well together, says Dorn. The team now have greater visibility across the entire operation ensuring better analysis and more informed decision-making.

"Now we have an integrated accounting system – it's easier to find out if we're making money or just selling more product for less money," says Dorn.

Centralising Information Enhances Efficiency and Security

Whether it is for accounting or customer service, document management and storage is crucial to all aspects of the business. However, it proved a challenge at Grafton Gourmet where employees kept their own version of documents on their PCs.

"No one could find the files they needed and we couldn't share files so customers would get quoted different prices depending on what version of a price list a person had," says Dorn.

With Microsoft Small Business Server 2003, the company's documents and other critical business data are now organised and consolidated in one place. Employees can find and access the information they need to be efficient and productive. A further benefit to a centralised solution is the ease with which data can be backed up. Dorn says this benefit alone has provided peace of mind.

"With backups every evening we know the previous day's data will still be there even if disaster should strike."

Dorn adds: "Not only can we find the right document when we need it, we are also able to limit access to confidential information even though we have a shared network."

Reducing Administrative Costs

By centralising its data and business processes, Grafton Gourmet has significantly cut down on administration and manual data entry, producing gains in productivity. This has led to a reduction in the number of employees required to provide administrative support.

"We have reduced the number of people working in administration from three to one and redistributed people from the office to the factory floor," says Dorn.

Providing a Competitive Advantage

Savings in time and money have not been the only benefits as the company discovered when tendering to supply its product to a major Auckland hotel.

Dorn explains: "The hotel insisted the supplier had an EDI (electronic data interchange) to permit the immediate transfer of data between companies. Our new system connects to the internet allowing us to provide this facility which helped us in winning the business."

hardware and software designed specifically for small business including new servers, desktops, laptops and mobile devices allowing employees to work away from the office. Included in the package was IT support provider SoftSource to help implement the technology.

Value to Business

- Information accessibility and availability
- Centralising management of information
- Greater control with visibility across entire operation
- Eliminating duplication of processes and documentation
- Future proofing with scalable system

Value to IT

- Ease of application eliminates need for specialised IT support
- Fully integrated functionality and scalability

Microsoft Technology

- Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003
- Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003
- Microsoft OneNote 2003

Partner Details

SoftSource
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“Essentially the technology has allowed us to compete with the big guys,” adds Dorn.

Mobile Technology to Provide Future Improvements

The technology has improved Grafton Gourmet’s service to customers in other ways, too. Currently its mobile technology allows the company to track its driver and provide its customers with realistic delivery times. The driver’s handheld PDA will soon be upgraded with further functionality to speed up the ordering process.

“We have plans for the future including allowing our driver to electronically enter new orders when he’s out delivering to customers,” says Dorn.

Investment in Technology Provides Great Returns

Prior to winning the technology package Grafton Gourmet was faced with two choices – buy a desperately needed truck or upgrade its technology.

“We probably would have bought the truck instead of upgrade our IT just because we already have computers but no truck. Now with the benefit of hindsight it would have been the wrong decision,” says Dorn.

“With what I know now, I would have invested in the technology as we have increased our revenue enough to cover the cost of both the technology and the truck,” concludes Dorn.