



**TECHLAND
GROUP**

Getting payback from CRM

How Techland includes finance in its customer relationship engine

Customer Relationship Marketing - CRM - the 'one-to-one' model. Not just business buzzwords - more accurately, they're the marketing Holy Grail for the late 1990s. And, according to marketing academics and analysts, we're all set to spend large sums of money trying to achieve this goal until well into the new Millennium.

The key to this quest is the database or data warehouse - an invaluable store for customer-centric information. If used correctly it will allow a business to tailor its offering exactly to the customer's requirements.

This is the concept which has accounted for a great part of the Techland Group's success. Techland is one of the UK's leading fax messaging gateway solution providers, supplying a range of connectivity products: network fax solutions which integrate with text, voice, email, document imaging, workflow, unified messaging and data communications applications to service a market which grew by over 30% last year.

Today, 64% of world-wide fax traffic is sent directly from the desktop. However, competition in this area is cut-throat - and he who stands still, stands to lose millions.

The Techland database system is used to match new products and services with customer needs. It also provides tele-sales staff with rapid access to current stock levels, vital for quoting accurate availability, pricing and delivery times to customers. This, however, is not enough to maintain pole-position in the market. Y2K and euro issues also posed potential problems for Techland, as its existing

systems were not yet prepared for either change.

To more fully exploit the corporate network and enhance customer service, the company wanted to automate more of the sales process. Integrating accounting functions with the existing sales and stock control systems to further automate tasks such as stock control, invoicing and sales order processing would greatly increase efficiency, and therefore profitability.

The company embarked upon a three month test and evaluation pilot of the Enterprise accountancy application, from Exchequer Software, and subsequently went live with eight modules. Techland had three distinct goals for a newly integrated accountancy solution: firstly, the software should streamline the sales order process; secondly, it should improve customer relationship management and lastly it should give sales staff access to detailed 'live' customer information while on the phone with the customer.

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Techland dealt with the first two goals simultaneously. It integrated the accountancy application with its existing messaging systems. With its own network fax gateway called FACSys, Techland fax-enabled Enterprise. The company can now send and receive faxes directly from the accountancy application. This fax-enabled benefit is easily and rapidly available to any Exchequer Enterprise user.

Purchase Orders and invoices are raised automatically. This has reduced the time spent on administration by 20%. These documents and others which originate in Exchequer can be faxed directly from the application without any user intervention.

The last goal was achieved through implementing Enterprise's stock control module. Staff are now able to access detailed information on previous customer orders by using the drill-down function. This gives the company a more

accurate picture of customer trends upon which to build future marketing strategy.

"The Enterprise suite has revolutionised the way we handle customer data," said Nigel Brown, managing director at Techland Group. "We have instant access to all the sales and purchase information on the system, which allows us to drill down as far as specific serial numbers on a single invoice line. This information is all stored in an open database, which we can use for other applications within the organisation, both now and in the future.

Other timesaving gains were made in the form of seamless transactions. Techland uses the MS Office set of productivity tools. All budgeting was done on Excel, which involved the manual input of data. With Enterprise, however, this information can be automatically updated in the accounting system using a set of OLE (Object Linking and Embedding) functions. This means that Techland can prepare general ledger balances, budgets or stock recosting in Word and Excel, and the information is seamlessly transferred to Enterprise.

The ODBC module allows data within Enterprise to be imported into other applications. Techland plans to use this functionality for contact management and help desk applications.

Exchequer's Enterprise accountancy system has enabled Techland to integrate all its customer relationship management processes. It gives the company's staff instant access to the data needed to offer a fast, flexible and proactive sales service. It also means that any customer order queries can be dealt with quickly and efficiently. The report writing module allows detailed summaries for internal and external use to be produced effortlessly.

The implementation of the new accountancy system has allowed Techland to make a quantum leap in customer relationship management. Integrating disparate applications and systems has enabled the company to maximise the usefulness and potential of its customer data. The end result for Techland is enhanced customer communication. After all, that's what the network faxing and unified messaging business is all about.