



Case study:
Instock Group



Instock Group

Established in 1974, Instock Group is one of the UK's largest distributors of cleaning and non-food catering supplies, delivering more than 10,000 products next day.

With two large depots in Scotland, they have decades of experience in supplying public and private sector organizations across the UK – from schools and universities, to assisted living, hotels, and restaurants.

They are proud suppliers to many leading names in the hospitality sector.

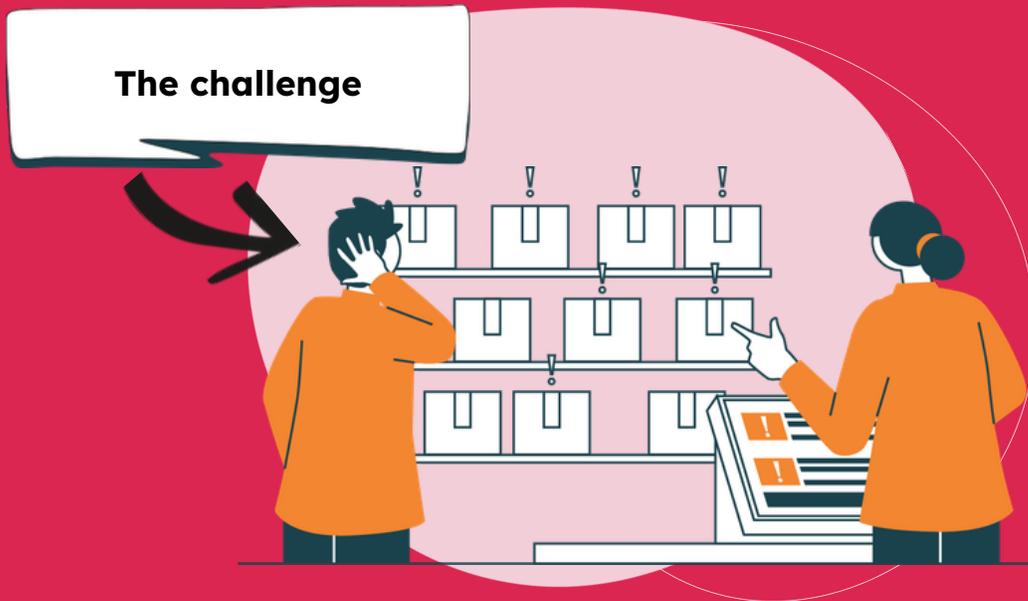
Instock also operates a highly regarded commercial kitchen design and fit-out division, and as a founding member of Maxima Trading Ltd, offers a wide range of value-added Maxima brand, and Maxima Green products.

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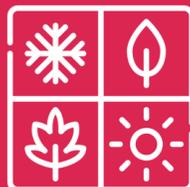




The challenge

Serving a diverse customer base with a product range of 10,000 SKUs and next-day delivery was causing the Instock team unnecessary inventory management headaches.

The team needed a way to enhance the functionality of Merlin, their ERP system, and to fully optimize their inventory





The solution

Instock's IT Director alerted Steven Watt, Purchasing Manager, about EazyStock, and once they saw how it could overcome their issues, they were hooked.

Not only did EazyStock meet all their needs, it also came with Merlin's backing, having already seen their customers transform their inventory management with the inventory optimization software.

Instock set clear objectives with their customer success team, Mark Chapman and Cristina-Alexandra Bennett, to:

- Improve purchasing efficiency
- Reduce costly back orders
- Improve pick rates
- Optimize warehouse space
- Free up capital tied up in slow-moving and dead stock
- Improve KPI monitoring
- Manage supplier performance

After comprehensive training, the team was up and running in May 2023, supported by Cristina and Amy Adams, and hasn't looked back.

The results



The results

Since implementing EazyStock, Instock has successfully enhanced control of its inventory management, enabling it to meet customer demand to an even greater extent, and achieve its targets. The results speak for themselves, with a significant reduction in excess stock and a notable increase in stock turn.

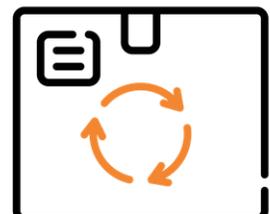
£300k

Reduced
excess stock
by £300k



15.79

Increased stock
turn from 14 to 15.79



Fewer back orders



Fewer customer and sales complaints



Improved pick rates



Steven and Senior Buyer Nicolle have seen a noticeable difference in service, especially with new customers, thanks to EazyStock's advanced forecasting functionality. When taking on new customers, they feed the data into EazyStock, which updates their forecasts to ensure they can meet the new demand.

*"Improving our forecast accuracy has been revolutionary for us. It's enabled us to **reduce excess by around £300,000**, which freed up valuable warehouse space to get the stock our customers need."*

With a deeper understanding of their customer profiles, the team have highlighted seasonal demand from their school customers. Lengthy manual calculations of school order forecasts have been replaced with automated recognition of seasonal profiles and forecast adjustment.

Accurate forecasts mean that stock levels have been reduced without impacting customer service; instead, pick rates have increased, achieving a long-term goal for the team.

With a better understanding of upcoming demand, Steven and Nicolle's ordering is more efficient. They now hold more of the stock they do need and less of the stock they don't, so they don't rely on costly backorders.

Demand change visibility

Instead of relying on someone to notice changes in demand and alert the team, EazyStock now identifies slowing sales to prevent dead stock. Proactively managing orders is a revelation for Steven.

Proactive alert management

EazyStock's alerts have been game-changing for Steven, providing him with more easily accessible information to stay one step ahead.

"As a manager, it gives me far more oversight at a really granular level. I can check the alerts to see what's happening and make any necessary changes to prevent stockouts or excess stock."

Changes in trends or sudden demand spikes no longer cause unnecessary stress, such as those that occur during the Edinburgh Festival. Instead, Steven can check whether it's a one-off or part of an ongoing trend, building stronger relationships with other teams.

"When I see an alert, I can assess and think, do we need to speak to the sales director or update the website?"

Previously, it could take months before we noticed the change, and then it was too late. Now, I can build sales peaks into upcoming forecasts or reduce upcoming orders accordingly."



“We’ve become better purchase officers because we understand things like forecasting and product trends more.”

Improved supplier management

With 10,000 SKUs, it could be a struggle to keep on top of suppliers, spending hours reviewing some, trying to understand what was needed. EazyStock has now freed up Nicole’s time, allowing her to focus on more strategic purchasing tasks.

“Even though your role is a purchase officer, there is so much more to that role. EazyStock has saved so much time thanks to supplier scheduling. The time spent on admin has been significantly reduced, making the role less tedious and more enjoyable. We’ve become better purchase officers because we understand things like forecasting and product trends more.”

Grouping suppliers enables the team to manage different groups on different days and frequencies depending on their product demand profiles.



“Improving our forecast accuracy has been revolutionary for us. It’s enabled us to reduce excess by around £300,000, which freed up valuable warehouse space to get the stock our customers need.”

Steven Watt
Purchasing Manager



Stock redistribution savings

Nicolle and Steven no longer need to go through each supplier to determine what stock can be transferred between Aberdeen and Livingston. Now, EazyStock handles it, providing redistribution reports based on demand data, saving Nicolle more time.

“Before, we were going through each and every supplier, looking at what we could transfer. It was almost daily at one point. We use the reports to identify what would be better placed at another depot where it sells more regularly to continue to reduce the obsolete and aged stock.”

Enhanced KPI visibility

With no need for expensive backorders or multiple spreadsheets, Steven has a range of KPI reports at his fingertips thanks to EazyStock’s clear dashboard.

“If we’re ever asked about backorders, I can show EazyStock’s KPIs, such as pick fill rate, which indicates how often you have the right stock in place when customers are actually ordering it, so we want them to be high. I no longer have to check multiple spreadsheets to check supplier information or spend hours calculating stock age.”



Pain-free onboarding

With a thorough understanding of Instock's challenges and objectives, the EazyStock team provided clear, tailored training to Steven, Nicolle and their team, as Steven explains.

"The initial training was excellent, and then the follow-up sessions became more comfortable as the team expanded their knowledge and their ability to use the system."

Once they were up and running, they knew they could contact Amy with any questions without worrying about incurring support costs.

"Whenever we've got a question, we can email and get a fast response. **We can't fault the team.**"

Regular catch-ups allow Amy to identify new functionality, such as new reports or alerts that could help the team.

"It's been great working with Steven and Nicolle to see how they've progressed over the past couple of years. **When customers understand the benefits and how to use the system, it makes our job easier because they're always ready to learn and improve. As we continue working together, the results will only get better.**"

Having seen the positive impacts EazyStock has had, going back to their old ways of working is unthinkable for Nicolle.

"Our jobs would become so much harder. We'd lose the visibility and understanding of our products, which would also negatively impact the company."

Steven agrees and recommends that anyone thinking about changing their systems should take the plunge.

"It might seem daunting, but as soon as you start using it, you'll never look back. The EazyStock team made the onboarding smooth and far more straightforward than we anticipated. **The results we've seen so far validate our decision.**"

eazy**stock**

Find out more

**To find out how EazyStock can help your
business, get in touch.**

Book a demo