

## SERIOUS FOOD DISTRIBUTION (SFD)

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### Serious Food Distribution – speciality foodservice distributor

**Accord – A system you can trust**

Speciality foodservice distributor, Serious Food Distribution (SFD), has radically improved efficiency across its business following its investment in an **Accord** system from Supply Chain Solutions specialist Business Computer Projects Ltd (BCP). SFD is delighted to have a system it feels it can fully trust, which is so well suited to its needs, and which it believes will underpin its future growth.

#### The Company

SFD is the foodservice wing of Serious Food of Llantrisant, the well known, high quality juice manufacturer, which produces most of the freshly-squeezed fruit juices and smoothies in the UK, as well as soups and premium desserts. Operating from depots in Slough, Llantrisant and Birmingham, SFD provides a nationwide distribution service to city centre hotels, catering establishments and independent retailers, using its own fleet of modern, multi-temperature vehicles to deliver a range of premium speciality foods and fruit juices.

#### The Challenge

The investment in new technology was stimulated by SFD's rapid growth and the need for a more sophisticated system to assist this growth and support its plans to open a nationwide network of depots.

The evolution of SFD from a distributor of company-manufactured juices to a national food service distributor had resulted in it operating several disparate systems handling different parts of its business. To improve efficiency, customer service and facilitate future growth SFD needed to replace these with a single solution able to manage all aspects of its business. Critical features required of the new system included comprehensive stock management, proactive telesales and multi-depot operation.

#### The Solution

Following a lengthy selection process, which reviewed offerings from a number of leading suppliers, SFD decided on BCP's market-leading **Accord** food service system, investing in a complete solution to encompass Purchasing, Sales Order Management, Stock Control, Telesales and Financial Accounting.

BCP secured the contract because of its food and drink industry background, consistent track record of delivering successful implementations and, not least, **Accord's** comprehensive functionality, which proved an excellent fit for the majority of SFD's business. A key element was **Accord's Telesales software** system which SFD believed would help them to grow turnover. Divisional Director, Vince Price, explains: We could see that **Accord's** proactive Telesales would transform our Telesales operation, allowing us to "sell" rather than just take orders. It looked good on paper, but seeing it in action at an existing client clinched it for us.

#### The Results

Keen to get the new system up and running as quickly as possible, SFD opted for a rapid implementation with the new **Accord** system going live at all depots over the course of a two month period.

Initially, SFD had intended to retain its current system for van sales, interfacing this to the new **Accord** solution. However, it quickly became clear that this was not necessary and that **Accord** was the optimum solution for handling all its business.

SFD is now benefiting from a single, powerful, modern IT solution controlling all its operations and providing true visibility, improved business reporting and key sales, product and buying information. Improvements have come through very quickly in the key areas of stock management, telesales and logistics, allowing the company to significantly improve customer service and grow turnover:

**Stock Management** – Stock control had been a major issue for SFD, largely because they were operating two systems which did not integrate to each other and which were not designed to meet the needs of a food service operator. As a result, a lot of time was being spent on manual checking of stock yet, despite this, service levels were still poor. The new **Accord** software fully integrates Purchasing, Sales Order Processing and Stock Control, allowing SFD to streamline inventory levels, minimise losses from out-of-date products and significantly improve customer service levels. Vince Price: We now know exactly what stock we have, where it's stored, what's on order and when it's due in, so we can fulfil orders much more efficiently.

**Logistics** – Moreover, there have been considerable improvements on the logistics side. The logistics guys rave about **Accord**, says Price, and the way it's allowed them to have a much more flexible approach to logistics and planning customer deliveries on particular rounds on particular days. Flexibility in logistics is critical for a distribution company like ours and this is probably where we're getting the most significant ROI.

Better stock control and more flexible logistics have resulted in significant improvements in SFD's service levels which are now at around 99%.

**Telesales** – SFD's existing Telesales operation was largely a paper-based, order-taking system. Operators had no information to hand on stock availability so had to take orders then check if the goods were in stock. With **Accord**, Telesales operators now have instant access to real time stock and pricing information alongside a whole range of other information, including order history, promotions and new products. This allows them to respond immediately to customers' requirements, offer a high degree of customer service and work proactively to maximise the sales opportunity by cross-selling and up-selling to increase the size of the order. Intuitive, easy to use and CTI enabled, the **Accord** Telesales system also allows operators to work more efficiently and contact more customers each day. Vince Price: The results have been superb and the telesales operators love it it's so easy to use. It's helped us to grow the business both in terms of the value of each sale and the number of customers contacted each day. Sales have gone up by 25% without any increase in staffing levels. All SFD's orders are now handled via telesales.

#### The Future

SFD is delighted with the improvements delivered by **Accord**, and plans to roll the system out across its estate, as it opens new depots at major cities across the UK. Vince Price believes investment in additional functionality is also a possibility, since **Accord's** performance has given them the confidence to review other modules and how they might improve operations.

Price concludes: Results to date have fully justified our investment in **Accord**. It has addressed all the problems we were experiencing and given us the power and flexibility to operate our business efficiently. It's great to have a system we can fully trust and which will underpin the future growth of our business.