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Glasswells Furniture Installs New IT System

Glasswells has been one of East Anglia's best known furniture and homeware retailers for more than 60 years and has built a highly successful business that includes five stores, a contracts division and a removals and storage operation.

An IT system was installed in 1998, but within a few years significant shortcomings in the system were becoming apparent, and by 2005 problems with scalability, interfacing with Windows products, unreliable tillage and lack of integration were all having a serious effect on the company's efficiency and profitability.

The decision was taken to look for a turnkey package from a supplier who could provide appropriate products, expert support and real value for money. Having spent considerable effort and money on the first system, Glasswells were very careful about how they chose the replacement, and eventually decided on Swan Retail. The main reasons were that Swan were willing and able to set up and support a full test system so that Glasswells could explore operational issues and identify potential problems; and that with Swan they had the opportunity to make a major contribution to the development of the system. It was attractive that Glasswells could fully integrate a customer service package for providing on-going customer care and support.

Roll-out of the system began in February 2008, with the installation of new touch screen tills, barcode scanners and receipt printers, and with the system handling customer special orders, purchase orders, stock control and the relevant accounting. Implementation in the gift department of Glasswells' Bury St Edmunds store went so smoothly that the remaining small ticket departments were using the system within three months – and full implementation for both small and large ticket transactions throughout the branch network is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Swan has supplied StoreTrader Epos software from their partner Pacific Retail Systems as a key part of the solution. Swan's managing director Dave Thompson says "Aside from its deep integration with the Swan Retail System, StoreTrader's inherent flexibility makes it ideal for handling the mixture of small ticket item sales and processing the monies associated with the ordering of big ticket items. And the

StoreTrader people are responsive and extremely professional – we know we can rely on them”.

The Result

Till reliability and functionality has been an immediate benefit, with greatly enhanced reporting, significant reductions in paperwork, and greater accuracy and completeness of customer information all contributing to the improvements in day-to-day operations. The inherent flexibility and scalability of the system gives Glasswells confidence that it will continue to yield considerable cost and performance benefits.

David Shephard, Financial Controller at Glasswells comments that “In a harsh market, Swan has proved itself to be both adaptable and responsive – and we’re more than grateful for all the help and support we’ve received throughout the system’s development and installation.”

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