

Elliott Baxter



“The Trinity solution offered an excellent platform for future growth in the use of information technology in our business, with far-reaching access into the whole of the Microsoft product set”

Terry Dixon, IT Manager, Elliott Baxter & Co Ltd

Trinity customer case study:

The UK’s leading independent paper supplier explores its information technology options.

Industry:

Paper Wholesale

Objective: Implement a new IT infrastructure that offers scope for extending the role IT plays in helping to cut costs and improve service levels to customers

Approach: Work with Trinity Computer Services to explore a modular solution based around Microsoft Dynamics GP

Key IT deliverables:

- An open IT platform for business growth
- Access to the extended business functionality offered by the Microsoft Dynamics applications portfolio
- Quicker, better information for all users

Business benefits:

- A much clearer picture of the true business position for users
- Improved sight of stocks and managing reserved stocks
- Enhanced logistics around delivery and collection
- Improved decision-making based on radically enhanced information systems

Rationale for the project

Elliott Baxter & Co Ltd, the UK's leading independent paper supplier, wanted to build an IT infrastructure capable of supporting future growth and offering a platform for exploring emerging IT technologies and opportunities in their business. An innovative player in the paper market, Elliott Baxter understood the benefits that the latest developments in IT could bring to their business. Their existing solution had served the business well for over 13 years, so the company turned to incumbent supplier Trinity for a replacement solution.

In an increasingly competitive market, Elliott Baxter required the new IT approach to help them keep costs low whilst at the same time improving the customer service proposition. The new 100 user Microsoft Dynamics GP system will address core requirements in Finance, Sales, Purchasing and Inventory and will provide the company with flexibility to respond to customer needs more quickly and accurately.

The business also expected to see improved processes for both ordering and deliveries as well as taking a major step forward in generating business intelligence across the organisation.

Catering for key business requirements

Elliott Baxter operates 10 sites nationally including their head office at Feltham, Middlesex. Over 100 users rely upon the IT system to maintain daily operations and manage over 5500 items on file in addition to over 3500 customer accounts.

With 1400 orders handled per day, and more than 60 users having order capture as their main role, it was critical that the new solution enabled Elliott Baxter to improve operations around ordering and its associated processes.

The new IT investment also had to account for Elliott Baxter's delivery service, which forms a key part of the business proposition. Over 50% of orders placed are delivered the same day and the remainder are on the customer site within 24 hours.

Managing stock across multiple locations, producing quotations, business intelligence functionality and extending the options around customer specific pricing also formed part of the brief for a new IT infrastructure.

“The Elliott Baxter project provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the depth of functionality offered by our Microsoft Dynamics GP based solutions and how we can adapt and extend this functionality to exactly meet the needs of our wholesale customers”

**Carl Bolus, Sales Director
Trinity Computer Services**

What was supplied?

Trinity recommended a modular solution based upon Microsoft Dynamics GP. The new solution combines a solid understanding of the needs of wholesale distribution operations with a wide range of technology options and product set built for future business growth and flexibility.

Trinity solutions for wholesale distribution provide software which caters for exactly the type of high volume, fast-service environment found at Elliott Baxter. The Microsoft core software at the heart of the Elliott Baxter implementation enables simple and extensive integration with MS Office and other Microsoft technologies aimed at improving user productivity.

Microsoft Dynamics GP covers all the core business applications including financials, sales, purchasing and stock control as well as very strong data access and BI capability. Specific Trinity modules being used are telesales, load scheduling, inventory replenishment and intersite transfers. Users screens are familiar and intuitive and Elliott Baxter can be comfortable that the technology set is continually benefiting from high-level R & D activity and easy to access upgrade plans.



Phasing of the project

Implementation of the new Microsoft Dynamics solution was carefully managed by Trinity and Elliott Baxter, using established change management practices, to minimise business disruption and create an environment for rapid, trouble-free transition.

Trinity's implementation team spent time in the business, ensuring they had a detailed picture of the Elliott Baxter operations and process flows. This allowed for accurate pre-configuration of the new system, highlighting areas where the new solution could provide added value.

Elliott Baxter also made a major commitment to the project. A key user group was formed with staff from head office and the branches. This group played a major role in vetting the new system design and then rolling it out and training users.

The initial phase of the project aimed to ensure all current functionality was matched and that users were fully trained and comfortable with the new technology and any new processes. Significant improvements were also implemented in a number of areas.

Having firmly bedded in the new system across the entire organisation, the business has now created an ideal platform on which to build on the new functionality that originally inspired the project.

Benefits and gains so far

Benefits from the new system are already evident in several areas:

- For all users and in particular for telephone ordering the system is much better at immediately providing relevant information, Elliott Baxter operators now benefit from:
 - Powerful customer and item search facilities
 - A simple view of the customers order history – items, frequency
 - A view of stock at every site on one screen
 - An improved stock reserves system, making better use of existing stock and producing improved service levels to customers
 - An enhanced 'price negotiation' screen – enabling users to quickly see all relevant pricing and discount information
 - Radically improved drill down capabilities
 - Overall significantly improved productivity
- The new solution needed to work well across multiple sites – a new inter-site transfers module helps Elliott Baxter manage stock across multiple depots, achieving a better balance of stock across the company
- For deliveries, load scheduling is improved – with better look up facilities. This has enabled Elliott Baxter to use the fleet more effectively, speeding up deliveries, creating more economic loads and shorter journeys through improved logistics. Furthermore collection notes have been improved, now automated and included in journey planning

“Users now produce most of their data queries and reports themselves. Apart from the required information being available much more quickly, it's also saving around 30% of our time in the IT team...which we can use to concentrate on further developing the new system. Overall as a result, major efficiency gains are being seen throughout the company”

Terry Dixon, IT Manager
Elliott Baxter & Co Ltd

- Purchasing and stock replenishment has also improved – an inventory replenishment module is providing better stock turn, providing scope for increased sales without having to increase stock
- Information access is now simpler and quicker for the Elliott Baxter management team as much of the activity is now done by users via Smartlists (the powerful information/reporting tool available with Microsoft Dynamics GP) – reports are viewed on screen and no longer printed, then easily exported to excel for analysis and manipulation
- Credit management has been significantly improved - credit controllers query, diary and prompt facilities are much improved compared to the old system

Plans for the future

The Microsoft platform at the heart of the Trinity solution for Elliott Baxter provides almost unlimited scope for developing a broad range of additional IT applications functionality. Elliott Baxter have plans to explore warehouse management opportunities and the use of Microsoft SharePoint technology. Two other items of particular interest are:

- Providing customers with web-based access to business information – pricing, current order status, product and financial account information visible at the click of a button, via the Microsoft Dynamics Business Portal
- Sending key documents to customers and suppliers electronically – invoices, statements and sales quotations to go out from the system via email. Both the above represent a major improvement in service standards whilst also cutting Elliott Baxter costs.



Trinity Computer Services

Trinity Computer Services is a leading Microsoft Dynamics Partner and an award winning software developer.

For over 20 years Trinity has been a recognised leader in providing specialist IT Solutions for the Wholesale Distribution sector. Trinity software helps wholesalers to improve customer service, reduce costs and make better business decisions.

Based on the solid foundation of Microsoft Dynamics GP, Trinity systems combine market leading innovation from Microsoft with rich functionality for distribution businesses. Trinity IT professionals have implemented over 200 systems in companies both large and small and can call upon a wealth of experience in delivering solutions that provide real benefits for your business.

“The advantages that the new Trinity system provides are already becoming obvious. This was definitely the right choice for us and we're now keen to start using the wealth of new technology available with Dynamics GP to help us grow our business”

Tim Elliott, Managing Director, Elliott Baxter