caliq

case study:

transomnia
the home of giftware

Caliq client since 2012

38 years experience

14 employees

supplying over 1000 UK and European retailers

Supplier of General Giftware

16,000 sq ft warehouse and HQ

the **power** behind your **wholesale distribution** business

Transomnia have been designing and sourcing giftware and home accessories for over 35 years, supplying retailers throughout the UK and Europe ranging from small independents to large high street retail groups.

Based just outside Tunbridge Wells, their purpose-built premises and showroom are the hub of their operation from creation of initial designs through to order despatch via their modern warehouse operation.

In 2012 Transomnia decided that they needed to upgrade their IT infrastructure. They had for many years relied on a 'home grown' customer, SOP and stock management system using Microsoft Access and Excel, together with commercial accounts software. The company that supplied the accounts software also had additional modules available for the stock, purchasing and distribution sides of the business, but having looked at these in detail it was felt that they were not sufficiently geared towards what Transomnia do, and the company therefore continued with their existing systems for some time. However, although these systems worked well for them, the lack of integration between the various components and the consequent demands on management time to keep them 'in sync' became an increasing issue, and was now seen as a barrier to further growth. This was when the search for a replacement system began.

Rod O'Mahony, director, explained what they found once they started looking...

"A few years back it was very difficult to find a system which was affordable for an SME such as ourselves, but which also had the functionality we needed to manage the business effectively. When we began looking again in 2012, we were pleasantly surprised to find that this was no longer the case, and that there were now systems out there aimed not just at our size of business but at our market sector. We ended up with a shortlist of two, both of which ticked many of the boxes on our list of requirements.

In the end Caliq won out due to their attitude towards those requirements and our business. Rather than telling us what we needed, or trying to make us change our practices to meet how the system worked, Caliq were genuinely curious and wanted to listen to and understand how and why we did things. In most cases, Caliq perceived the enhancements required to Caliq's functionality to meet our needs as good ideas that would benefit the system and future customers, so agreed that they would make the system do it."

A number of specific 'points of pain' were identified within Transomnia, that have been successfully addressed by Caliq.

Powerful Stock Allocation

Probably one of most fundamental and biggest boons to Transomnia is Caliq's Stock Allocation functionality. Rod explains:

"Caliq definitely handles Stock Allocation better than any other system we looked at. Every day we have to fulfil orders making sure we are providing the service our customers expect, but also maximising the efficient use of our stock. The variables can include forward orders, seasonal deliveries, multiple call-offs and drops etc, and we want to get it right. The system knows what we have in stock, but we also have stock arriving from multiple sources, from many outstanding purchase orders. We obviously also have many outstanding sales orders. The system knows what we have sold and when it's due for delivery, what stock is in the warehouse and how much of it is required to fulfil those orders, as well as what further stock is on its way and when it's due. The system is therefore able to automatically allocate stock to sales orders when it needs to - but, perhaps even more importantly, doesn't if it isn't needed yet! If we need to we can manually change an allocation - the system will recognise that we've done so and not amend that allocation through the automated process.

This means we can maximise our delivery capability, and in turn that means our customers get what they were expecting when they were expecting it.

This is more efficient for us, but also can only help cement our service reputation and help generate more business long term".

Flexible Buying & Merchandising

MD Shane O'Mahony, who is also the company's head of buying, was keen to explain how Caliq also helps him on the purchasing side.

"We worked closely with Caliq to develop a module called Stock Coverage. This looks at available stock relative to sales orders received on a weekly or monthly basis. These can be split to show what's been ordered by National Accounts (whose requirements can distort overall sales trends) from other sales orders. It illustrates not just sales but the trend in demand for any given product, and we can drill down to see what products are (and aren't!) creating demand across a wide spectrum of our customers. This is crucial information that helps us determine whether we need to order more, how many and when".

Scalable Warehouse Management

Transomnia don't currently use Caliq's Hand Held Picking system, although it may be implemented at some point in the future. However, Rod explained how the Warehouse management module in Caliq still really helps with flexibility and efficiency in the warehouse.

"The Warehousing side is brilliant. It copes with multiple ways of organising the warehouse.

We don't identify aisles, but we use bin locations and the pick lists are always printed in the most efficient bin sequence. We can classify bin locations as to whether stock can be allocated from them and / or whether stock can be picked from them. We also set replenishment levels by bin and the system produces a replenishment report showing what we need to top up the pick locations and where that stock is currently held.

Allocating despatch methods is also very flexible in Caliq. We can specify zones (e.g. country, county or postcode) and the default despatch method to be used for each zone. In turn we can define the carriage charges for each method, based on either weight or order value, or a combination of the two. The system is completely automatic in terms of working out whether carriage should be charged and if so how much, but we can also override the default settings at customer level if we want to change to a customer-specific charge".

Precision Purchasing & Forecasting

Transomnia use Caliq to really help their customers make informed decisions on what to buy. One example of this is the Customer Purchases Report which Caliq developed for Transomnia. Rod explained:

"Many of the retailers we deal with have no systems to tell them what to order. If an item is not on the shelf in their shop, they don't necessarily know what they have sold out of! That's why we asked Caliq to develop this report. It can be run for an individual account or for the whole customer list, with parameters to allow selection of customers by marketing preferences, when they last ordered, etc. It shows them everything they've bought from us over a user-defined period, how many they've had in that time, and when they last had them, then emails the report to the buyer. We can also use parameters to exclude any stock lines which have since been discontinued or won't be available for a specified time.

This is really helpful for retailers, so it makes them happy while at the same time resulting in extra business for us".

Automated Photo Quotations

Asked if there were any other areas where Caliq had really helped, Shane quickly said "there are lots - take photo quotes, for example."

With Transomnia's old systems, if customers asked for quotes with pictures of the products this was a long and arduous task, involving typing product details into Excel and then importing images alongside them.

"Now we simply raise a sales enquiry, add the products the customer is interested in and the system produces a PDF Photo quote which can be e-mailed to the customer.

It's a huge leap forward - it's effortless and saves us so much time.

There's also an increasing demand these days for high-res images of purchased products, as more and more retailers go online. Caliq allows us to export images of all the products in a sales order to a folder on the desktop at the click of a button."

find out what we can do for your business...

Working with Caliq?

Asked to summarise the benefits of working with Caliq, both Rod and Shane had no trouble in describing their experience.

"Caliq are great at recognising functionality that is totally relevant to the industry, rather than just niche, and their 'can do' attitude is really refreshing. The system has been developed through listening to the needs of our business and many others like us, and that really shows in what it does and how it does it."

"Put simply - we love it, we couldn't do without it and we often question how and why we did for so long. They're also nice people!"
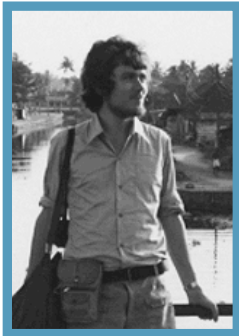
Shane at the beginnings of the Transomnia journey.

...Caliq is now the software solution of choice for multi-channel wholesale distributors operating in the Home, Gift, Garden and allied sectors.

Our focus is on you...

Our aims are to provide clarity over all aspects of your business, deliver efficient and effective processes through your supply chain, implement controls where you need them, margin monitoring and performance analysis at all pressure points and the tools for your team to deliver outstanding customer service. A Business Intelligence module helps you monitor and manage every aspect of your operation.

With all that in place, the ultimate aim is to aid your bottom line and provide you with a business solution that empowers you to grow your business knowing that you and your team have the right tools in place to support your Company wherever you take it.

If the Caliq community sounds appealing for your Company, we would be delighted to talk face to face. We'll bring some chocolate!

visit www.caliq.com
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Thanks very much to Shane and Rod O'Mahony for their time and cooperation in preparing this case study