



case study:

Garden Trading®

Calio
client since
2014

23
years
experience

37
employees

supplying
over 1500
UK and
international
retailers

Designers
and producers
of premium
homeware

35,000 sq ft
warehouse
and HQ



the **power** behind your wholesale distribution business



Garden Trading have been in business for 23 years providing an established and well-known brand of distinctive garden and interior products, which are well designed and practical, with their trade mark classic clean lines and colours.

The range covers furniture, kitchen, garden, household, storage and lighting products which are now found in major retail chains, independent stores and garden centres across the UK and beyond.

In 2014, Garden Trading realised that with their Sage 50 system struggling to keep up with the business, they needed to upgrade or they would be held back.

Office manager and head of purchasing, Tracy Dixon, explained the position they were in.

“The system was not coping with the volume of transactions we were processing or the way we wanted to do business then and in the future, namely us starting to sell through different channels, direct to the consumer, as well as handling trade sales. We had to run two separate stock systems, which meant that items showing as out of stock when trade customers ordered, were in fact in stock, but flagged as available only for consumers.

The old system also held very little history, so trying to analyse what was selling, in what quantities and to who was almost impossible, which in turn made purchasing decisions difficult”.

The search for a replacement system started and Garden Trading looked at Sage 200, SAP and MS Dynamics Nav.

Tracy summed up what they found. “Each of these systems had their merits, but notable shortcomings, not least the price! At the level we were expecting to invest, we needed to be sure that our needs were going to be met from the start and long into the future.

When we met Caliq, it quickly became obvious what a great fit the software was for our business, but it was Caliq’s approach and attitude towards making certain of what we needed and

detailing how it would be implemented, before we even signed up, that really gave us the confidence to go with it”.

The priorities were getting the trade side of the business up and running, followed by the warehouse management, picking and despatch system. This would be followed by the retail operations.

“All the way through the implementation, Caliq’s collaborative and flexible approach helped enormously. They always listened to how we worked and if the system worked slightly differently, they would explain why other clients worked in this way, in case it would help us. If we agreed, we would adapt, but if we were adamant about something, Caliq would adapt the software to suit. It is very much a partnership where both parties benefit, as well as other Caliq customers”

Tracy described Garden Trading’s main ‘points of pain’, which they wanted Caliq to address.

“The old system created a divide between sales and service, which definitely held us back to an extent. Now we can address both sides very successfully.



Powerful Stock Allocation

Stock management was our biggest headache. The old system had no usable purchasing history, which caused problems on the buying side, but now we have detailed data which helps enormously. The 'bible' in terms of stock and purchasing is an on-screen enquiry called 'Stock Coverage'. This paints a clear picture of what stock we have, when it will be needed and what we should be buying and when.

The biggest boon is that all parts of the business share the same stock data. That means whether orders are coming in from Reqs, on the telephone, from the website and / or from the retail side, they all use the same data. This means accurate allocation of stock, releasing of stock held if more is coming in in time etc. The benefits this provides to customer service and our reputation just cannot be overstated! We can also review which products are working, in which channel, which we could never see before".

An area where Caliq has revolutionised the business is in the Warehouse, utilising Caliq's fully integrated hand held terminal warehouse system.

Warehouse manager Matt Davies, has this to say about the system.

"The system intelligently handles goods in and put away. Detailed location management means automatic checks on products and locations when they arrive, are moved, or picked for despatch. This ensures speedy and accurate movement of stock at all times, which in turn drives customer satisfaction".

Sales orders are sent to the hand held terminals sorted into the most efficient picking sequence and allocated to specific users. Checks are done on every pick to reduce errors not only on what is being picked but also from where.

All activities are fully audited, which provides full traceability of stock movements as well as whom they were carried out by, which can save enormous amounts of time.

Matt: "The system has really increased our picking efficiency and minimised the possibility of errors. Even better, if an error does occur, it can be identified and resolved really quickly".



Scalable Warehouse Management

A further huge benefit provided by Caliq is the packing option and Courier integration with a software package called Scurri.

Scurri is linked to major courier companies and through sets of rules, can decide which courier is the most suitable for the delivery being processed and it prints the correct despatch labels, meaning only one printer is required. Caliq and Scurri also talk to each other in order that a courier tracking number can be generated, which is then stored in Caliq for reference.

"Working with Scurri has been fantastic" commented Matt. "It has meant only one system integration job, one PC and one printer are required, however many couriers we may use or however many times we change. (www.scurri.com)

Summarising how Caliq has changed life in the warehouse, Matt had the following to say. "It's just superb. The warehouse is like a well-oiled machine and as the business has grown, we have been able to cope without necessarily needing extra staff. I couldn't even think about reverting to paper based systems!"



Precision Purchasing & Forecasting

Purchasing: As important as selling and logistics is the purchasing side of the business. It's no use achieving good sales, only to have issues with delivery and / or not having a good handle on costs. Tracy explained how much Caliq helps with what is one of her main focuses day to day.

"There is amazing flexibility and transparency which helps enormously. Purchasing can be from multiple suppliers and you can record separate costings. The system using FIFO pricing is a massive benefit too. Being able to view detailed history when deciding what to order is really helpful



Effortless Financials & Accounting

Head of finance, Nicola Reid, is delighted.

"It's all just so efficient. We can instantly get a visual impression of the balance sheet with totals and as with every enquiry we can do, we can export to Excel with two mouse clicks if we want to further analyse what we are seeing or do 'what ifs'.

On the purchasing side we can see an overview of spending compared to our budgets, which is really important. On the sales side the credit control is brilliant. PDF invoices are quickly e-mailed to the clients as well as two statements a month, which really helps with cashflow.

A phrase that keeps being repeated is 'just one button'. "It's true!" comments Nicola. "So much of the key information we need to get to on a day to day basis is just one button away, which we love".

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The implementation?

Tracy doesn't hesitate. "Just fantastic. Excellent project management meant we had agreed timescales and everybody knew what Caliq and we had to achieve and by when. Caliq took on all our data and did thorough testing. For the agreed 'go live' date, we did a stock take and Caliq did a final data import.

The old system was switched off on Friday and we started using Caliq on the Monday! Caliq staff were on site with us for 7-10 days at that point to make sure everything was running smoothly and all our staff were happy with how the system works".



Would you recommend Caliq?

"Definitely!"

Caliq is totally geared to what we do and this has come about because the team behind it understand the requirements so well, but also because of their desire to continually improve the product in a way that all their customers benefit".

Jon Holloway
Garden Trading Founder
& Managing Director



...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
call us on 0845 123 5433
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Thanks very much to Jon Holloway, Matt Davies, Nicola Reid & Tracy Dixon for their time and cooperation in preparing this case study