

CASE STUDY



Sunflex
THE HOME OF WINDOW DECORATION

**'TRANSFORMING THE BUSINESS
THROUGH WAREHOUSE
OPTIMISATION'**

ABOUT SUNFLEX >>>

Sunflex is a hugely successful supplier of pre-packaged curtain track, poles, blinds and accessories, with over 40 years' experience. Customers can choose from stylish collections of curtain poles and finials, ready-made roller, cellular, vertical and venetian blinds, metal and plastic tracks and accessories. Providing creative, dynamic solutions for modern living, the company offers the largest collection of window fashion products, supplying leading UK retail groups and soft furnishing outlets such as Dunelm, John Lewis and Homebase. At its warehouse in Cannock, Sunflex picks and packs orders for distribution to its customers.



THE CHALLENGE >>>

THE CHALLENGE THAT SUNFLEX FACED

Sunflex approached Cedar Bay to implement a complex warehousing project. The company had been experiencing difficulties with its picking and distribution and was incurring heavy fines from customers for late product deliveries, missed targets and other problems such as pallet labelling issues. These functional, performance and reliability issues were causing fissures in Sunflex's commercial relationship with their customers, resulting in large overheads.

The warehouse team at Sunflex has to pick and pack orders to keep up with the varying delivery times set by various retailers. Parts get unloaded, wrapped on pallets and put on shelves before picking and assembling of orders. These orders can be sent all over the UK, which adds another element to the picking process priority list, which is necessary to ensure that deliveries are carried out efficiently. Some parts in the warehouse are reserved and some aren't, depending on the customer

process: to complete the particular order the picker is working on, it is up to the individual shop floor worker to pick as many items as possible, based on the stock levels at that time.

Considering these factors, Sunflex required a reliable data capture solution to track and trace products in their warehouse and to ensure that warehouse staff can meet their targets and delivery quotas each day. Their previous data capture solution was not

performing correctly, making life on the shop floor difficult for the workforce in the warehouse, and the overall situation was creating a huge financial strain on the company.



THE SOLUTION >>>

HOW CEDAR BAY MET THE CHALLENGE

In implementing a new, complex warehousing solution, the Cedar Bay consultancy team undertook a 3-phased approach, designed to meet Sunflex's specific objectives. The replacement of its legacy solution by the Cedar Bay solution saw a 60% increase in efficiency within the first few months.

The main drivers for the project were to increase picking and stock accuracy, remove customer-related penalties and simplify processes, whilst decreasing stored knowledge of the picker and building the instructions into the solution to drive any picker to perform any task, reducing the reliance on paperwork.

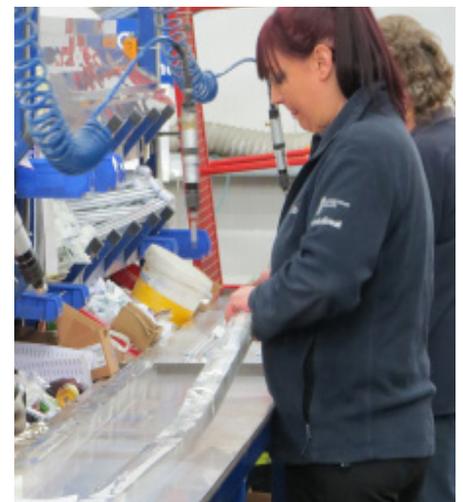
Phase 1 focussed on the picking system to align it to a major customer's picking process. Products need to be distributed all over the country, so it is essential that picking is completed in order to ensure that deliveries hit transport deadlines. Different shape objects in mixed quantities make packing and transport difficult. The focus was on improving efficiency and increasing performance with the same resources. This area was where Cedar Bay focussed its

energies in the early stages: a complex warehousing solution that IFS cannot do out of the box.

Phase 2 involved wave picking (a process whereby orders are combined and picked, according to each individual order requirement), an aspect developed by Kevin Mason, IT Manager at Sunflex. Cedar Bay consultants then instructed Kevin how to configure the software to achieve what he required. Prior to the Cedar Bay Automated Data Collection solution being implemented, there was limited real-time information in the Sunflex facility and a huge over-reliance on paperwork. This meant that information was taking hours, or even days, to be updated, when it should be done instantly so workers are able to tell how many units are left in any specific location within the warehouse, allowing

almost real-time status updates back to customers' websites.

Phase 3 is currently under development to align all other areas of the warehouse to the Cedar Bay solution and provide full traceability using mobile scanners and tablets. The main focus is to fine tune some applications such as Put Away and Move Part to work with multiple GTIN (Global Trade Item Numbers) types that are required within the retail industry for GTIN 13, GTIN 14, GTIN 8. A project for MTO (Made To Order) will be introduced to allow for increased efficiency and to lower the overall stock on hand for exclusive products for our internet customers.



THE RESULTS & THE FUTURE >>>

THE RESULTS

Cedar Bay aligned its phased implementation to Sunflex's business objectives and since implementation the picking operation has improved by 60% in terms of efficiency. Many of the issues and inefficiencies that Sunflex had experienced previously came from the limitations of the legacy software and its failure to work correctly: a single system error would result in thousands of pounds in costs or fines. Now Sunflex is able to utilise and use software that works efficiently and accurately, rapid, noticeable improvements have been made.

Many benefits have been noticed since administering Cedar Bay Apps, not purely a reduction of costs. A combination of changes resulted in changed practices: an out of the box solution with configurations to keep things as simple as possible for its users.

- Custom views in Cedar Bay to improve efficiency.
- Approximately 85 users on the shop

floor with wearable Zebra WT6000 1D scanners and Zebra TC8000's used elsewhere for 2D scanning.

- Warehouse users report simplicity and ease of use.
- 70% of online orders take 3 scans to pick – picking trolley, inventory location, product.
- 70% of online orders take 2 scans and a click to package and despatch –

order trolley, part, finalise.

- 60% improvement rate over inaccurate coding from previous partner.

Cedar Bay now helps with all aspects of ERP: hardware, infrastructure, software and consultancy.



THE FUTURE

For some time, Sunflex's ERP solution had not been performing correctly: it was recognised as a server/Oracle problem that had been tackled by a number of companies (including IFS), in order to try and resolve, but with limited success.

This was impacting heavily on the processing time involved in the warehouse picking and packing transactions, for both legacy systems and then (partially) with the Cedar Bay solution. Aware of its technical support and infrastructure team, Kevin Mason approached Cedar Bay to establish if they could find a solution.

Following a brief "deep dive" review and initial recommendations, the Cedar Bay team is now well on the way in resolving the issue; performance is back to an as-expected state and Sunflex are ultimately restructuring their entire ERP environment with the Cedar Bay technical teams' guidance.

This has resulted in the Cedar Bay and IFS solutions working significantly more efficiently. Plans are under consideration for Cedar Bay to further improve server performance with a server & Oracle version upgrade at some point in 2019. Goods-In is currently a manual process and plans are being made to move to

automation soon and to implement the Cedar Bay solution in the manufacturing warehouse, where we will introduce Control Plans for a full quality inspection at point of purchase receipt and automate NCR's with document management.

How can we help you?

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e-mail: marketing@cedar-bay.com

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