

Rifina refines I.T. options and chooses Blue Rock

Richard Bartlam, the forward looking electrical wholesaler's managing director explains why Rifina trusted Blue Rock & Intact software to 'run the business'. Rifina is an independent Gloucestershire-based Electrical Wholesaler and has just celebrated 30 years in business.

Our company motto is "We keep our promises" which seems a simple enough claim but can often be hard to keep, especially when manufacturers let us down. Within Rifina, much is dependent upon a chain of people working together. We rely on members of staff working across all three branches – Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Cirencester – and work as one company. Thus we do not set one branch against another, but see ourselves instead as one warehouse with three doors.

This company ethos might seem strange to others but it has enabled us to centralise our sales office, streamline our deliveries, keep better stocks and, most importantly, still give individual attention to each and every customer. This personal service aspect of our business is why I still publish on the back of all company literature my private telephone number, so that any customer can contact me directly if company standards fall.

After 20 or so years with our present software company, it was felt that we needed a much more integrated software solution that included the CRM that was currently lacking. Indeed, we are at present running two sets of customer data, one for stock and sales, etc., and one for customer-related day-to-day information and reps' reports. We needed a package that combined both.

Having looked at many other systems on the market, we found Intact almost by chance. Even at the initial meeting it became clear that this was a potential frontrunner. However, because of the current lack of Electrical Distributors in the UK using the system, we had to go and look at an Irish Electrical Distributor - an eye-opening, but not unpleasant, experience - to see it working in our industrial sector.

Some of the benefits identified within Intact included:

- Automatic maintenance of stock levels throughout the company.
- Ability to drill down and examine in detail all company data.
- The ability to import and export data into MS Excel or Word so that changes could be made quickly and easily.
- A system where managers could be alerted when procedures and guidelines were not being followed, to prevent mistakes being made.
- A system to keep Proof of Delivery (POD) paperwork scanned and attached to the relevant documents.
- A more efficient purchasing process, allowing suppliers with advantageous prices to be recommended by the computer.

What we have been most impressed with is the way Blue Rock listened to our specific requirements. Even suggestions made during the initial sessions were taken away and thought about and, if felt necessary to improve the software, were quickly implemented so that at our next meeting they would come back and say, "Done that!". All this, even before we had agreed to come on board...

At the end of the day, our list of modifications required to the product was reduced down to one or two minor issues. Successful implementation of a new system requires a lot of faith in the company behind the software and requires a real partnership. I feel confident that the partnership between Rifina and Blue Rock will stand the test of time.

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