

Business Partner:

OBJECTIF LUNE

HPC constructs a much more cost-efficient accounts receivable workflow.

Client profile

Home Project Centre (HPC) Sales Ltd.

hpc-group.ie

- Building supply company with locations across the Republic of Ireland
- Stores include TJ O'Mahony, McCarthys Hardware, PH Ross, Commons Hardware and C&D Providers
- Provides building materials, timber products, plumbing and heating materials, and other related goods to professional tradesmen and do-it-yourself home improvers
- Privately owned business has expanded from 7 to 14 stores within the past five years



Overview

Home Project Centre (HPC) is a building supply retailer that is serious about customer service. This approach has paid off, as the company has grown over the past few years to become Ireland's largest privately owned merchant in this sector. However, the expansion brought into focus certain inefficiencies in invoicing processes. The company worked with Pitney Bowes® to introduce new streamlined, digital-first workflows. As a result, it dramatically reduced postage costs and staff time spent on paperwork, while minimising the risk of errors that could lead to customer service issues.

Business challenge

Many HPC customers make purchases on trade credit accounts. In years past, the invoicing method depended on where the purchase was made. One store had a Pitney Bowes PB FIRST™ document processing system that generated daily invoices. "If a customer bought one item every day in that store, they would get an invoice in the post every day," says Damien O'Grady, HPC's IT Director. "That was neither cost-effective nor customer-friendly."

"Our relationship with Pitney Bowes is strong. This new workflow is working very well; it has allowed us to streamline our customer document processes."

— Damien O'Grady, IT Director, HPC

Even less efficient, the company's other stores handled all invoices manually.

Salespeople printed invoices for customers to sign at the point of sale (POS), then filed them at the sales desk. Employees collected the invoices, sorted them by customer and mailed them with account statements once a month.

Technology used

- Relay® 3000 inserter

Even as sales on trade credit have increased, HPC has reduced franking and postage costs by more than 50 percent. Paper and envelope costs are also down.

"The paperwork could get lost or damaged, or we might send an invoice to the wrong customer," O'Grady says. "The stores used stamps, so postage was expensive. And the process took a lot of staff time. A medium-sized store had 200 accounts, each receiving a statement plus a number of invoices each month." In 2018, HPC processed 190,000 invoices on trade accounts.

Solution

As the business grew, HPC decided to centralise and standardise invoicing processes. The company also needed to replace the legacy inserter that coordinated with PB FIRST™.

Pitney Bowes® helped O'Grady and his colleagues design a print-to-mail workflow. They rolled out PlanetPress Connect from Objectif Lune to manage distribution of both digital and paper invoices and a Relay® 3000 inserter that would get the right printed invoices into the right envelopes quickly and efficiently.

Now, all invoices for trade credit purchases are initially electronic. They reside in HPC's POS system until they are sent as a batch file to PlanetPress Connect, along with information on customers' preferred communication channel. PlanetPress Connect sorts the invoices by customer, and HPC can add marketing materials, such as special offers or price change notifications. For customers wanting electronic communications, PlanetPress Connect automatically sends invoices and marketing materials via email. For the rest, PlanetPress Connect sends invoices to a printer, with marks that tell the Relay inserter how to group and mail them.

HPC also rolled out Capture OnTheGo, a document workflow solution for mobile devices. When an order is placed for delivery, it receives a Capture OnTheGo ID via the POS system. PlanetPress Connect sends the order's paperwork to the correct driver's tablet computer. Upon delivery, the driver opens the customer document, the customer signs electronically and the driver submits the approved proof of delivery form via the Capture OnTheGo app. Within 10 minutes, the form shows up in HPC's POS system, where it is linked to the appropriate invoice.

Benefits

The new workflow is highly configurable. For example, some customers receive invoices daily, while others receive them once a month. In developing invoicing schedules, HPC aims to minimise both postage costs and the number of envelopes that require manual inserting because of paper volume. HPC has also moved 70 percent of customers to electronic invoicing.

Even as sales on trade credit have increased, HPC has reduced franking and postage costs by more than 50 percent. Paper and envelope costs are also down. "This process has made a massive difference," says O'Grady.

In addition, management has better visibility into postage spending. Salespeople no longer have to worry about juggling paperwork, and each store is saving a great deal of staff time on managing and posting invoices. "Our relationship with Pitney Bowes is strong," O'Grady concludes. "This new workflow is working very well; it has allowed us to streamline our customer document processes.



OBJECTIF LUNE



Based in Montreal, Quebec, Objectif Lune produces OL™ Connect Technology, a toolbox for producing and sending personalised communications across print, web, email and SMS. PlanetPress Connect, PReS Connect and Capture OnTheGo are components of the OL Connect toolbox. Pitney Bowes is an Objectif Lune Gold Partner.

For more information, visit us online: pitneybowes.com

Pitney Bowes, the Corporate logo and Relay are trademarks of Pitney Bowes Inc. or a subsidiary. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.
© 2019 Pitney Bowes Inc. All rights reserved.

18XXX03036_UK