FAIR TRADE – AND GREENTREE MAKES IT RELIABLE

Oxfam Shop's ERP system helps open up new sales channels.

CHALLENGE Oxfam's big prospective buyers demanded electronic transactions. Oxfam also needed better inventory control, purchasing and data management.

SOLUTION Greentree's reliable EDI keeps the big supermarkets happy, inventory is visible at stores nationwide, and Greentree Secure provides the backup & recovery process that is essential in today's world of electronic commerce.

RESULTS EDI draws many more customers to Oxfam's wholesale channel, the important Christmas period is trouble-free, and backup is slick and reliable.

David Horner, Chief Information Officer,
Oxfam Australia Trading Pty Ltd

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The principles of Fair Trade are simple: empowering disadvantaged communities by paying them fair and stable prices for their work. Sales of Fair Trade coffee, chocolate and handicrafts help these communities to improve their lives by helping them to gain the skills they need to develop their business, and giving them access to world markets.

But to get those Fair Trade products into Australian stores where they'll attract more buyers requires a sound business footing. Oxfam has achieved this, with the help of its Greentree system.

 "A successful business model is crucial," says Oxfam's Chief Information Officer, David Horner. "We've managed to get Fair Trade Products into the big supermarket chains, Coles and Woolworths. This has given us a great opportunity to increase the awareness of our brand and increase its distribution throughout the country. We also have a successful online store, which has enabled us to improve our retail channel by further increasing reach and providing a convenient way for consumers to shop online."

Electronic demands met

The key to getting that supermarket trade was Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Both Coles and Woolworths demand it as a condition for doing business, and Greentree was there to provide the infrastructure for electronic ordering, dispatch and payments.

"The bottom line is, for those big chains the EDI solution has to work, and work consistently," David explains. "We can't afford to have orders going missing or not being processed, and the reliability of our Greentree system gives us that important trading lock-in. It also saves a lot of time in terms of re-keying orders and eliminated human error."

But ironically, when David joined Oxfam, it was on the verge of ditching the Greentree system that had been in place at Oxfam Shop for several years in favour of the SAP system.

Why change systems?

Oxfam had implemented SAP as its financial system and was planning to switch its trading arm over to that system as well. However, the SAP implementation had struck problems, and one of David's first tasks was to assess the business case for rolling it out across the Trading division.

"I advised against it," he recalls. "We felt that SAP was too large and too specialised a solution for what we needed."

"I quickly saw that they had a perfectly good ERP system already in place with Greentree, and all it needed was a little updating to do the job required. Overall, Greentree was a better fit than SAP, and that decision has saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars in implementation and operational costs."

Greentree's EDI and sales order processing were added to the existing Supply Chain & Distribution and Financial Management functions. Christmas is the busiest time for Oxfam's shops, when tens of thousands of Fair Trade items are purchased, and stocking to meet the demand is planned months in advance. Greentree's strong purchase order capabilities were configured to accommodate this.

Backup & recovery guaranteed

Oxfam's huge database of over 1500 products once meant considerable time spent doing backups, but the Greentree Secure backup & recovery product has changed all that. It enables Greentree to be recovered to a point prior or up to the point of failure, providing vital operational security in today's fast-moving world of e-commerce.

"We have quite a complicated process for downloading sales from the various shops, which happens overnight, and occasionally the backup run would interfere with that and cause that process to fail," David says. "This meant delays in running the replenishment algorithm. This was a real problem in

the Christmas period, when replenishment of shops is so critical.

"Greentree Secure gives us fast and robust backup & recovery processes, and the stability of our interfaces back from the shops is also much better."

Managing change, gaining stability

Oxfam has also benefited from using Greentree Inventory Management to keep stock levels in retail stores consistent. Greentree receives retail sales data from Oxfam's POS system, enabling accurate forecasting of replenishment needs, which then is translated into picking orders for staff at Oxfam's Adelaide warehouse.

"When I first came on board, the business had no clear visibility of its inventory, particularly at shops," says David. "We built Stock In Transit movements into the Goods Issued and Goods Receipting process between Greentree and the POS system, so we now have very strong inventory management capability."

Greentree has helped to put Oxfam Shop on a solid business footing, so it can deliver greater returns to producers in the developing world.

"In what has been a time of quite significant change and financial pressure, making smarter use of what we already had in Greentree and extending its functionality in a controlled manner has provided that extra degree of stability to the business," David concludes.

"Reliability is the key, and that's what our Greentree system has delivered."

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Oxfam shop
FAIR TRADE

Oxfam Shop is a passionate supporter of fair trade and deals on a fair trade basis with 60 fair trade organisations around the world, who support thousands of producers including Indigenous Australians. Fair trade empowers disadvantaged communities by paying them fair and stable prices for their work, helping them to gain the skills they need to develop their business, and giving them access to world markets.
www.oxfamshop.org.au

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