Ultraframe....

"We have significantly improved customer service and substantially reduced our overhead costs using DbFax from Version One. It paid for tself in just 20 days." says Nigel Canning, IT Manager for Ultraframe.

Ultraframe is Europe's leading specialist designer and manufacturer of conservatory roofing systems, and has developed a wide range of roofing products and components for a variety of conservatory applications, domestic and commercial. Projects include large span enclosures for leisure facilities, pool enclosures, atria and restaurants.

Based in Lancashire, the company was founded 16 years ago by John Lancaster, now vice-chairman. It employs 600 people over four sites in Clitheroe, Lancashire, Bristol and Bedford. With an annual turnover in excess of £60 million, it was floated on the London Stock Exchange in October 1997, and is now valued at over £350 million.

Ultraframe have a 96 user Hewlett Packard computer system running Tetra's CS/3 ERP software. Concad, a proprietary in-house computer aided design based system, is used to design and create a bill of materials for all the components in a roof and Ultraframe's own order processing front end software integrates with the Tetra CS/3 accounting, order processing and inventory control systems.

The Problem

Ultraframe ship hundreds of conservatories each week, and each one has to be checked technically, have a manufacturing slot scheduled, and then have transport and delivery dates arranged. All this information needs to be confirmed to the customer as soon as possible. There have been two attempts

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>
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with previous systems suppliers to implement automated faxing, but with very disappointing results. Unstable products and limitations across different operating systems all proved problematic and unsuccessful. Ultraframe was resigned to faxing these order acknowledgements manually but, as it is very labour-intensive, there wasn't always time to acknowledge every order due to the sheer volume throughput.

"We were wasting time and money tying several people up manually faxing acknowledgements, and because they were not able to fax them all, it created additional problems. We were not providing the level of service our customers deserve", explained Nigel Canning.

Dramatic Savings

A reputation for technology, quality and product innovation is reflected in the way Ultraframe runs its own computer systems. It has recently changed computer supplier to take advantage of the most extensive product portfolio available to complement its diverse applications and needs.

Ultraframe's new systems supplier, Datel Computing, proposed DbFax from Version One Ltd for automated faxing. Like many Tetra resellers, Datel has incorporated the Db family of products into its own product portfolio. Steven Hampson, Datel's Sales Director, commented: "We have a high demand from our customers for integrated fax systems. One of the main attractions of DbFax is that it integrates seamlessly with all the

Tetra software, as well as the vast majority of Unix and windows products. It is extremely flexible and highly functional. With the vast majority of our customers using DbFax and making dramatic savings, we can't recommend it highly enough."

DbFax now automatically faxes order confirmations to customers when an order is processed. It was taking up to seven minutes per fax by traditional methods and then more time to collate the information. Automated faxing has improved efficiency as well as making significant savings on pre-printed stationery. The faxed document is also of a much higher quality - crystal clear, in fact. DbFax has helped Ultraframe to avoid out of hours work and delivery, and significantly reduced overtime working, whilst increasing the quality of service to their customers.

Exceeded expectations

"The solution that was delivered really exceeded our expectations; we are very impressed - a unique situation as our standards are so high. It is fully automated, transparent to users and absolutely stable." comments Nigel Canning. "UNIX products are not usually easy to use, and PC products do not provide the functionality we need. We have never before found anything to bridge this gap. DbFax integrates with any application and software on any platform. We were also very reassured by the fact that Version One are a strategic partner of Tetra's and their software is very tightly integrated into the whole suite of Tetra products."

"I couldn't believe the price of the product in comparison with the functionality and savings it provides. It paid for itself within just a few days and we're now faxing over 11,000 documents a month automatically using DbFax. It does the job all day, every day and is the first software product we've bought that we have never had a problem with – we've never even needed to make a support call!"

Tight integration

DbFax is tightly integrated with the Tetra CS/3 software used by Ultraframe. Its use is going to be extended to include the automated faxing of statements and remittance advices, as well as allowing everyone the facility to send ad-hoc faxes from the desk-top. "We are so pleased with the success of DbFax that we have ordered its companion product, DbForm. Tightly integrated into the complete range of Tetra products, this software automatically merges the computer text with an image of our pre-printed stationery and prints the documents on to plain paper on laser printers. It totally eliminates pre-printed stationery and we will be using it for all our invoices, despatch notes, etc. This will generate significant additional savings and boost productivity", enthused Nigel Canning.

Version One products may also be recommended to Ultraframe's specialist registered fabricators, who are supplied with computers and software financed by Ultraframe. It will be recommended as software that will 'dramatically enhance your business'," says Nigel Canning.

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Steven Hampson, Sales Director, Datel Computing Ltd