

STAR

MICROSOFT
NAVISION

A particular attraction was that it combined the benefits of an off-the-shelf package with a custom-built solution.

An in-depth Case Study

**P R I M E
L I G H T**

PRIME LIGHT

With data extracted from Navision, we can instantly view up-to-date customer information, looking at turnover, buying history, year-to-date sales by customer or by item, and so on.



Prime Light Electrical Ltd has built a solid business over the last 10 years. Specialising in the sale and distribution of electrical components to the lighting and related industries, the company acts in many cases as sole and exclusive representatives for manufacturers around the world – and now supplies virtually every lighting manufacturer in the UK, as well as distributors and wholesalers.

Prime Light Electrical's success has been built on its reputation for customer service and its breadth of product range. From the smallest components such as grommets, cable clamps and terminal blocks through lamp holders, plug and socket systems, to transformers, control gear, fluorescent lighting, switches, interior and exterior lighting – Prime Light is the supplier of choice for hundreds of customers.

“We really do believe that the customer is king,” says Miran Khesro, Financial Controller for Prime Light Electrical,

STAR

“and everyone within the company goes out of their way to deliver exceptional customer service, whether dealing with a technical query, advising on the best product solution or making sure that an order is fulfilled and despatched as efficiently as possible.”

This attitude has been instrumental not just in helping to build a sound and loyal customer base but also in attracting distribution deals with some of the world’s leading manufacturers, who are keenly aware that Prime Light Electrical is to some extent a custodian of its vendor partners’ reputation among the ultimate end users of their products.

An important supporting role in the company’s success has been played by Prime Light’s IT system – the Microsoft Navision business management solution – which is aimed squarely at the mid-sized company. Navision integrates financial, manufacturing, distribution, customer relationship management and e-commerce data. A significant advantage is that users can pick and choose from a range of applications, adding processes and routines at their own speed and in line with the specific needs of their operation. This also means that the system fits

the business, rather than the other way round.

The impetus for Prime Light Electrical’s move to Navision started during 1996 when the company decided it wanted greater flexibility than its Sage system was able to provide.

“At that time, the Sage package was quite rigid in its procedures, it could not cater for foreign currencies – a problem considering the number of products that we sourced from overseas – and it was fairly slow. We looked at seven or eight alternatives before taking the plunge with Navision. A particular attraction was that it combined the benefits of an off-the-shelf package with a custom-built solution,” Miran says.

“Less attractive then, was that Navision was not very well established in the UK. I think there were only four or five users, so we were a little nervous about how it would work out. But we took the plunge and decided to install the general ledger, payables, receivables and inventory applications, with help from a Danish-owned Navision reseller. Our act of faith was vindicated when the power and flexibility of the package became apparent during system modifications



“Star is a reliable and responsive external resource for us,”

Miran Khesro
Financial Controller

to meet our specifications – and our confidence was boosted further when Microsoft bought Navision,” he adds.

Although the system went live in 1996, the relationship with Star Computers began about five years ago when Star acquired the Navision reseller and took on responsibility for the reseller’s customer base. Even then, Star had extensive experience of the deployment and development of Navision and this was to stand Prime Light Electrical in good stead as it expanded the use of the system, most recent of which was implementation of the bill of materials and assembly facilities within the manufacturing module.

“Star is a reliable and responsive external resource for us,” Miran continues. “We have been through

several system upgrades and application enhancements with Star, without any real hitches, and we know we can rely on good advice and quick resolution of any problems that might occur. Star has a secure dial-in connection to the system and can fix most problems online, rather than having to send a member of its support team to our trading and warehousing unit in North London. As the IT system is central to the way in which we run the business, this degree of confidence is very important to us.”

Prime Light Electrical is fortunate in that once its customers are on board, they tend to be pretty loyal. The company has a team of salespeople out in the field and also attends the major trade fairs, and these activities – together with a good level of repeat business – help drive revenues. But Miran and his colleagues appreciate that keeping the customer satisfied is vital to the long-term future of the company. To this end, they keep a very close eye on the customer base.

“With data extracted from Navision, we can instantly view up to date customer information, looking at turnover, buying history, year-to-date

sales by customer or by item, and so on. If sales are down, we make it our business to find out why and build volumes again. We also avoid common causes of customer annoyance, such as late delivery or shortfalls on order fulfilment. Similarly, we ensure that all transactions are 100% accurate before they are posted to the financial system, reducing the need for credit notes.

“Our objective, once we have a customer, is to keep them for as long as possible – whether they are buying the smallest of components, assemblies or finished products. Minimising churn is a key consideration,” Miran says.

Prime Light Electrical emphasises its commitment to continuous review of its performance, strengthened wherever possible by investment in computer technology, in its sales team, its distribution logistics and last, but not least, in its portfolio of products.

On the IT investment front, the next project for Miran and Star is likely to be the addition of a contact management application together with an enhanced customer database to help ensure that at Prime Light, the customer continues to be king.

UK

Star Computers Limited
Star Centre
Building 3 Hatters Lane
Croxley Green Business Park
Watford WD18 8YG
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1923 246414
Fax: +44 (0) 1923 254301
Email: sales@starplc.com
Web: www.starplc.com

IRELAND

Star Computers Limited
Carmichael House
60 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2
Republic of Ireland
Tel: +353 (1) 661 3030
Fax: +353 (1) 246 7201
Email: sales@starplc.com
Web: www.starplc.com

USA

Star Americas
8770 W Bryn Mawr
Suite 1300
Chicago, Illinois 60631
USA
Tel: +1 (773) 867 8343
Fax: +1 (773) 867 2910
Email: sales@starplc.com
Web: www.starplc.com