EvoLink Case Study:

The Bread Factory

Established in 1993, The Bread Factory are an award-winning artisan bakery. Based in London, they produce quality fresh baked goods, delivering daily to businesses and retailers within London and further afield. For this business, an efficient supply chain and logistics facilities that ensure the timely delivery of their food products is critical.

To provide additional support within their logistics operation, this business was looking to upgrade their IT infrastructure. With their delivery services rapidly expanding, they knew they had to look at ways to remove their reliance on paper-based systems and remove pressure on their growing operations.

The ultimate business goal was to facilitate the delivery of high quality, fresh baked goods within a tight delivery schedule. With the annual cost of non-deliveries now exceeding £50,000 per annum in refunds, the business required a system that would allow them to streamline their operational processes and provide real time end to end visibility of their logistics operation.

The Bread Factory turned to Manchester based TouchStar Technologies to provide a fully integrated electronic proof of delivery system.

Data first with PODStar

The company's Enterprise Resource Planning system feed's many other business systems within the Bread Factory, helping deliver the key information that drives the customer's order journey from start to finish.

Processing daily orders, the ERP builds a data base of information from customer's names and addresses through to orders requirements, delivery dates and POD requirements.

The company's ERP feed's many other business systems within The Bread Factory. From providing specialist packing instructions and creating unique barcode identities, through to route planning and optimisation, vehicle and driver allocation and finally, the input of special delivery instructions, each system provides a carefully timed data feed that ensures that each stage of the order is managed as efficiently and is as streamlined as possible.

Seamless integration between the multiple planning systems and the proof of delivery system was made possible by TouchStar's own EvoLink middleware platform. Previously a manual process, the complexity of managing information from so many data feeds was both inefficient and prone to human error.

Whilst direct integration between the back-office systems and the proof of delivery was possible, EvoLink simplified the complexities around integrating multiple data sources and formats into one system. For this customer, the use of a standardised integration platform significantly reduced the lead time from project development to go live by more than half.

Now errors associated with double data entry are removed as EvoLink automates the transfer of data between back-office systems and the front end, populating the proof of delivery system with accurate and complete delivery and job/run information in a presentation ready format.

Results and benefits

Working with TouchStar, The Bread Factory were able to automatically consolidate information from all their current data feeds. With each data feed occurring at different scheduled times, EvoLink was able to take the component parts of the overall data and extract them from each of the multiple systems. Once the data had been extracted, EvoLink reformatted the data before uploading the information into the proof of delivery system as individual jobs or runs.

With the system fully populated, the driver now has full visibility of the transport plan, detailing route numbers and drop sequences along with the confirmed number of boxes on each delivery and any special delivery instruction. The TouchStar system also provides route optimisation, ETA and auto-send of the proof of delivery.

With the proof of delivery, customer queries have dramatically reduced with the time taken to resolve any issues significantly reduced. As such, the system has played a key role in reducing costs, increasing customer satisfaction, and providing a flexible infrastructure for future growth within their operations.

The benefits of automated data transfer mean The Bread Factory also have absolute confidence in the accuracy of the data they receive back from the system. Key information such as dwell time or late deliveries can all be fed back via EvoLink

to the back-office system to improve business performance. The real time nature of the system means that problems can be acted immediately which has had a positive effect on customer service.

The feature-rich and flexible proof of delivery solution, with local UK-based support, has enabled TouchStar to listen, configure and adapt the solution to The Bread Factory's requirements. As the system evolves, TouchStar can continue updating the system to grow and change along with The Bread Factory's needs. Any further changes to back-office systems or data sources can be managed effectively within EvoLink, with the middleware effectively reformatting any changes with no impact on the overall system experience.