



CASE STUDY:

BG ELECTRICAL

INDUSTRY:

Electrical

COUNTRY:

United Kingdom

B2BE SOLUTIONS:



EDI



Email



Print



Fax

AT A GLANCE

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

BG needed to become more efficient and responsive to client EDI demands and streamline document management processes.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Using B2BE's EDI managed services BG were able to respond quickly to customer EDI demands as B2BE managed the on-boarding process and have also been able to fully outsource all client invoices via B2BE print management solution.

Customer Profile

With over 60 years of experience in the manufacture and distribution of electrical accessories BG has gained an enviable reputation for quality, safety and performance. In November 1999 BG Electrical merged with Masterplug and Permaplug enabling BG to offer the most comprehensive range of portable power products to the electrical wholesale market.

2006 saw BG Electrical form part of the Nexus Industries Group and in order to support all of the exciting new opportunities for the Electrical Wholesaler BG have invested in a professional team of personnel at their sales offices in Telford, Shropshire where they operate a 120,000 sq. feet distribution warehouse facility to help ensure the highest possible levels of customer service, care and support.

Nexus Industries is focused on four core product categories that include BG Electrical Wiring Accessories, Masterplug Portable Power, Arlen EFA Lighting, as well as Ross Home Entertainment Products. These brands and products are sold in a number of different markets nationally and internationally and BG are always looking at ways of further improving customer service levels.

The Challenge

BG trade with a number of customers in a number of different markets via EDI and to do this BG used two providers which made trading with new customers difficult and complicated, as well as costly. Further, adding a new customer meant an inordinate amount of time allocated by the IT team to any one project, which in some cases, wasn't economical or didn't provide any return on investment in terms of time and cost saving.

The business, which has a history dating back to 1854, also runs a nationwide catalogue business, an online shop and employs a total of around 500 staff.

- The initial challenge was to provide BG with a robust platform where the BG IT team didn't need to re-create document maps or change file formats, including adding data fields to add a new customer;
- Secondly, BG wished to remove the day to day management of each roll-out so they could focus on their core systems and business and only needed to be involved when testing was required with their core ERP system;
- BG's challenge was also to remove the two incumbent providers to streamline EDI (and other) processes through one flexible solution and partner;
- The final challenge, which materialised during the migration of all current EDI trading relationships to B2BE, was to provide an e-Invoicing solution. Specifically, print and post with the option to move more to email and facsimile to reduce operational costs. This challenge emanated from the consolidation within the business that necessitated a fast turn around to enable the distribution of hard copy customer Invoices.

BG ELECTRICAL

The Solution

After speaking to BG and understanding the current scenario in which they traded electronically or manually with their customers B2BE were able to provide a solution geared around the BG Purchase to Pay environment with a focus on e-Invoicing. The B2BE products that were suggested to BG and also adopted included a combination of EDI via the B2BE EDI, Print Management solution and Email and Facsimile Gateways. Combined these products enabled BG to trade with any customer electronically or manually in the case of customer Invoices.

B2BE EDI

The B2BE EDI provided the interfaces with BG's systems to enable the upload and download of various electronic documents in a proprietary BG format including: Customer Purchase Orders, Dispatch Advice, Invoices, MRS and Remittance Advice.

The file formats were designed at the outset to negate any further changes and if the BG system didn't contain customer specific information or requirements, B2BE add the relevant data through the B2BE enrichment process.

B2BE were then able to retrieve or provide the file format supplied to or from the BG customer in their pre-defined formats and preferred protocol. Some of these customers include: Argos, B&Q, Jewson, Rexel, Sainsbury's and Wilkinson.

The B2BE EDI also provided the mechanism by which BG were

able to send Invoices to B2BE for on-forwarding manually via print and post or via email and facsimile. The solution initially designed meant BG didn't even need to change their Invoice file format, they simply needed to output the remainder of their customer Invoices daily for B2BE to on-send appropriately.

Further, B2BE provided a managed roll-out solution so BG needed limited involvement with the migration of existing EDI connections through the incumbent providers so over a period of time all customers trading via the incumbent providers were migrated to B2BE and the incumbent providers were no longer required. Any new trading partners can now of course be added very quickly.

B2BE Print Management

The print and post solution was a secondary challenge to enable BG to consolidate some business activities. The solution was required to be in place within a month to ensure BG could still transmit hard copy Invoices to their customers.

This was relatively easy to achieve, the file format had already been setup so B2BE only needed to create the program to emulate the look and feel of the hard copy BG Invoices, a simple process for B2BE. The solution was in place within a month and B2BE now manage the hard copy distribution of Invoices which also means BG can capitalise on B2BE's consolidation processes to reduce the number of articles and BG can dictate when the hard copy Invoices are sent enabling further consolidation.

B2BE Email and Facsimile Gateway

The final solution, which was provided at the time of the print and post solution also enabled BG to start sending customer Invoices via email or facsimile. Data in the file determined the distribution methodology and B2BE simply used this and route the documents to the appropriate area within the B2BE network for transmission.

This meant BG could also reduce the number of hard copy Invoices that were sent which BG again controls. This has seen a net reduction in hard copy customer Invoice distribution, therefore reducing document distribution costs.

The Outcome

The combination of the B2BE products and BG's forward thinking has now provided a solution to BG that enables them to be highly responsive to customer's EDI requests while also providing an e-Invoicing solution which automatically facilitates the mechanism by which BG can reduce operational costs.

The solution has been a great success for BG and B2BE with BG adding a new division to the e-Invoicing process which took a relatively short period of time to implement given the robust nature in which the initial environment was setup.

BG can now focus on their core business and the IT department no longer needs to provide constant support to the business for new EDI implementations or the management of existing connections.