

Epicor Success Story

Sovini Group

BisTrack delivers supply chain improvements at The Sovini Group

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Liverpool, England
- ▶ Industry: Independent builder's merchant
- ▶ Web site: www.sovinitradesupplies.co.uk

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Needed an enterprise package that could grow with the company, was fully integrated with the capability to span all departments

Solution

- ▶ Epicor BisTrack

Benefits

- ▶ Mobile access helps the company move away from being a paper based business
- ▶ Helps staff to complete jobs faster and better achieve targets
- ▶ Gives customers full visibility into the ordering process
- ▶ Improves customer satisfaction



Epicor BisTrack is delivering efficiency and cost savings to Sovini Trade Supplies Ltd. The company supplies materials to local contractors as well as repair and maintenance companies, including Sovini Property Services who look after more than 16,000 housing association properties across the North West. Owned by its parent company, The Sovini Group, this independent builders' merchant opened its doors a year ago headed up by director, Anita Harrison-Carroll. The Sovini Group is a Housing Group, with a number of growing commercial businesses, who also bid for work outside of the Group.

Sovini Property Services has a work force of over 200 highly experienced maintenance operatives, a large number of whom had been re-employed from a previous contractor who went into administration. "They were used to buying what they needed to complete each job from any supplier they wanted," Anita explained. "Obviously this meant we weren't buying efficiently and could make no economies of scale. Also I wanted to be able to guarantee quality and certainty of specification."

A number of housing associations have in-house stores for their maintenance teams to draw from. The Sovini Group believe they are unique in operating their own independent builders' merchant! "We had the opportunity to buy a merchant company with its own established customer base and with experienced staff," said Anita. "We created Sovini Trade Supplies, brought

in new and improved product lines, and moved the whole operation to the new, modern facility from where we operate today. The merchant company had already implemented BisTrack stock management software and the staff were used to working with it.”

As well as supplying Sovini Property Services, the merchant operation has retained all of their existing external customers and they are now attracting new business from other housing associations, local contracting companies in the North West and a growing number of national construction companies. Anita said, “Although we are a profit making company, our social conscience is at the heart of everything we do. We have no shareholders, so every penny comes back into the Group to build more houses, develop new services and create more jobs. Our new customers seem to like buying into this ethos.”

Sovini Trade Supplies already depends upon the core BisTrack product to manage its stock, process deliveries and trade counter sales, and purchasing. The works order module also manages the company’s in-house manufacture of gates and doors. But where Anita believes BisTrack will really prove invaluable is by managing her new system of ‘van packs.’ These are catalogues of products designed to meet the needs of individual tradespeople such as joiners, electricians and plumbers, as well as ‘void packs’ of products needed to service empty properties. Each catalogue will be stored in BisTrack and each trade has a dedicated day each week to order and collect what they need from their appropriate catalogue to meet that week’s schedule of works. Orders will be placed remotely by the team on their tablets via RDP and will be ready for them to collect from the trade counter the next day.

Anita said, “We’re trying to move away from being a paper-based business. We already use the catalogue system at our trade counter and working this way has increased our teams’ productivity. It helps them to complete jobs faster and improves our customer satisfaction. The staff themselves can now see the benefits too, they are spending far less time on the road and they are getting the products that they need and that have been specified by the client. It’s helping them to complete more jobs and achieve their targets. Housing associations have a lot of targets to meet in terms of the number of days it takes to complete a job and so on, and we think we can assist in their achievement by improving the supply chain not only for our own group but for other housing associations across the country.”

To work out products needed for each pack, Anita used BisTrack to analyse each tradesperson’s purchase history, but the van stock templates and product catalogues are constantly reviewed and updated.

There are over 25 BisTrack users at Sovini Trade Supplies and, now the new merchant has established operations, Anita says she is ready to start using more of the system’s functionality. “We’re going to start using the journey planner to help improve our logistics. I also want to start using the web portal as I know this will really help us grow our business and set us apart from other merchants. Our account customers have told us what’s really important to them, even more so than pricing, is having visibility of their costs, what they have been invoiced for and what’s been collected, etc. We can offer them that visibility through the online customer portal in BisTrack. Being able to offer this was certainly one of the reasons we have just secured a new national contract. We’re also going to operate the online trading module, initially for general sales to our own staff, and then open it out to our wider customer base.”

The company is also about to implement the BisTrack Scan Track module which automatically matches up proof of deliveries (PoDs) with the appropriate sale in the system. “The biggest reason for delaying payments is having no access to PoDs,” said Anita. “We’re going to issue our four drivers with mobile devices linked to BisTrack so they can get signatures on delivery, as well as using tablets on the trade counter to capture signatures at the point of sale into BisTrack. We’re also going to be using BisTrack Mobile on hand-held devices in the warehouse for receiving goods in to the system and for picking orders.”

BisTrack already helps Anita keep track of sales and profitability through dashboard reports. However, she’s recently identified new Builders Merchants Federation performance indicators she wants to track to help further analyse profitability per sales person and product. “We are currently running workshops with our users and key account holders to understand what we want and how we can get the best from the system, including smart views. I need to measure how we’re performing against industry standards. We’re also planning to offer our trade customers a standard suite of reports based upon what is important to them—generated in BisTrack.”

Anita was recently awarded a ‘Women in Construction’ award for ‘Outstanding Business Leader.’ “It was a new award category

so I'm really proud to have won! We'd gone through a tough year, introducing new ways of working and instilling the 'Sovini culture' in our team. I love managing the operational side of things and seeing the transformation of our business and our

people. We're planning to develop our business and hopefully at some point open new branches. BisTrack is going to be instrumental in helping me and the whole team as we grow and move forward."

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software that is designed around the needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 40 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements is built into every solution—in the cloud, hosted, or on premises. With a deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions spur growth while managing complexity. The result is powerful solutions that free your resources so you can grow your business. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.



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