



## Epicor Success Story

# Maxiim and Total PDA

## Epicor inspires leading electronics distributor to increase order volumes, accelerate fulfilment and develop new business

### Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Scotland
- ▶ Industry: Electronics Distribution
- ▶ Number of Locations: 1
- ▶ Web site: [www.maxiim.com](http://www.maxiim.com),  
[www.totalpda.co.uk](http://www.totalpda.co.uk)



### Success Highlights

#### Challenges and Opportunities

- ▶ Growing business with a need for a modern, scalable ERP platform
- ▶ Disparate systems that could no longer support the company
- ▶ Needed flexibility to work with major retailers and suppliers
- ▶ Seasonal business spikes

#### Solution and Services

- ▶ Epicor ERP and Epicor Service Connect

#### Benefits

- ▶ Reduced purchasing team work by 80%
- ▶ Automated pricing structure with data presented in updateable dashboards
- ▶ Streamlined order process—as little as 6 minutes to process
- ▶ Ease of integration to other systems
- ▶ Flexibility and ease of development

Market leading consumer electronics distributor, Maxiim, provides supply chain management and logistics across the entire retail spectrum, from supermarkets and catalogue merchants to discount and speciality stores, including Amazon®, Sainsbury's, Littlewoods, Asda, Tesco, Makro and Costco®. As a tier one distributor for many high profile brands, including TomTom™, Garmin®, Pioneer, Yamaha® and HP®, the company has earned its reputation for innovation and agility, keeping it at the forefront of a dynamic marketplace.

Maxiim operates a flexible distribution model geared to maximising opportunities for both retailers and manufacturers throughout the product lifecycle: enabling retailers to evaluate which products resonate with their customers before investing, while manufacturers get their extended ranges listed across multiple online channels generating incremental revenue and valuable market intelligence.

The business was founded in 2000 as Total PDA, now Maxiim's sister company, which supplies over 50,000 educational, corporate and trade organisations as well directly to individual customers. The privately-held group employs approximately 40 staff members with an annual turnover of £25m and occupies impressive an 36,000 square feet of office and warehouse space.



“Ten years ago, our CEO was sitting on a beach reading about satellite navigation,” says Alan Walker, managing director for Maxiim. “When he returned he established the company and became an early distributor of the TomTom range of sat nav products. We then added other electronic devices to the product range and today we trade with all the major retailers in the UK, as well as the grocery and catalogue markets. We’re continuously evolving and seeking opportunities to grow and refine the business, especially in the areas of eCommerce, integration with retailers and specialist category management of the brands we represent.”

### Focus on customer service

The company’s reputation for unparalleled customer service is what sets them apart from their competitors. Founded with the simple ethos of supplying the latest products at the lowest prices, with the backing of exceptional customer service, Total PDA is constantly seeking new and better ways to serve clients.

“One of our current business challenges revolves around the seasonality of buying electronic gadgets,” says Walker. “Orders always peak during Christmas, Easter, Father’s Day, etc. Our biggest challenge is to maintain a consistent flow of business with fewer spikes. We obviously still want the big months but we’d like to see less of the down spikes! Our ability to extend ranges on a drop ship basis is helping us to achieve this goal. We have put agility at the heart of our business philosophy. A combination of balance, coordination, speed, flexibility, strength and endurance enables us to deliver value in the ever-changing retail landscape.”

### From disparate systems to single ERP

Back in 2008-2009 Total PDA was using a mishmash of various software packages and bespoke applications to manage their operations. “This didn’t support our business and we needed to review the situation to ensure that we put a platform in place that could help us grow exponentially,” says Walker.

He says, “We therefore did a thorough evaluation of the enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions that seemed to suit us and the choice fell on Epicor because it looked like a flexible business solution with good scope that could develop as we grow. It was competitively priced for the amount of functionality and modules we needed, and it looked like we got more of a complete package than with some of the competing products. Put simply, we liked the offering and scope of operational support that Epicor offered.”

Stewart Kinnon, IT manager for Maxiim, explains the challenges with running several disparate IT applications, “The packages we had in place were getting old, they were transaction driven and couldn’t integrate with the major retailers that we do business with. This was holding back the business, reconciling data and figures between systems was getting very time consuming and pricing was handled manually on spreadsheets. One of the key benefits we’ve immediately seen with moving to Epicor was bringing everything into one single place. We now, for example, have one complete pricing matrix that manages customer pricing, which is a very complex piece. This has been one of the real successes from implementing Epicor ERP.”

### Implementing ERP—always stay up-to-date

The implementation didn’t go completely without any hiccups. Initially Total PDA and Maxiim were set up as separate companies in Epicor because this seemed like the best idea at the time and the plan was that they should operate independently. After about 18 months it was decided that it would be much easier to bring the two companies together under one umbrella so that inventory and finances could be managed in one place. “We made a call to bring both companies together in Epicor but still set up so that we can report financially on the separate entities,” says Walker. “This added to the amount of work needed to be done in the early stages.”

Another lesson that the team learned the hard way was that it’s always best to continue to upgrade to the latest version of any ERP software application that is being used. “We should have stayed current with upgrades from the very beginning,” says Walker. “The upgrades resolve bugs and other issues without us having to go through the pain of getting them fixed ourselves. We understand that now and advise anyone who is going through an ERP implementation to always upgrade to the latest version.”

Kinnon adds, “Go live with the latest, or latest but one, version, use the business process methodology that Epicor advises, and do the process mapping correctly and you will avoid a lot of potential pitfalls. The operational practices that Epicor recommends really work because they’re based on their experiences with many companies over many years.”



He says, “We would advise any new ERP users to draw on this experience and get the help of their expert consultants; it will be cheaper and easier in the long run. The consultant we used was absolutely outstanding. Also, we would recommend that a company should be as thorough as possible on going through every single business process in detail because projects can fail on the smallest process that you haven’t thought of. Make sure you test everything in your specific environment, throughout the company, and document every process. That way you increase your chances for implementation success.”

## Reducing purchasing team work by 80%

Total PDA and Maxiim have achieved several business benefits since implementing Epicor ERP. Kinnon explains how they have been able to reduce the purchasing team’s work on the complex pricing structure the company uses.

He explains, “At the moment every single product we sell is registered in Epicor as an individual ‘part by customer’ and we have around 500 active parts at any one time for each customer. A code is built in behind the supplier and customer price lists to assign rules based on certain instructions such as accruals, rebates, discounts and margins. The logic is programmed in to automatically perform calculations and produce the correct sales cost price and margins. We have also developed an updateable dashboard that presents the status in tabular format so that the finance team can review costs and true margins at any one time. This process has helped us reduce the amount of work that the purchasing team does by about 80%. When we talk to the team they say that it used to take them about 15-20 minutes to raise a part in the old system, it now takes them 2-3 minutes to perform the same task. It’s a true business benefit for us.”

## From processing hundreds of orders to thousands

Another major process improvement is the way the company manages sales orders. The business model means that to fulfil consumer orders for major retailers the company has to both hold stock and ship direct as well as do a lot of drop shipment fulfilment, working with manufacturers to plan demand and supply.

Walker comments, “Major customers such as Littlewoods, for example, places their order on our website, we then fulfil that order. We get a number of such orders from them per day. Previously when we received an order we had to input the data onto several systems both within our company as well as on Littlewood’s ordering system so if you needed to amend or edit the order it had to be done manually in several places. By the time the products had shipped we then had to go back into the systems, mark the order as despatched etc. It was a time consuming process. We had 5 people working full time on order processing. They manually handled about 200 orders per day. With Epicor we could automate the entire process and we have gone from processing 200 orders to nearly a thousand, with the same level of staffing.”

Scalability has become a key benefit for the company. “The fact that we can scale from processing just a few hundred orders per day to thousands is a huge benefit to us,” says Walker. “It means that we now have a platform in place that can support the growth of the business. Our personnel requirement per order is significantly less than before—and we can now fulfil orders from the point they are registered to the point where they are packed and dispatched in minutes rather than hours!”

## Inspiring the supply chain

Walker says that the improvement in customer services has not gone un-noticed. He explains, “We constantly talk to our customers about the flexibility in the solution and they recognise the speed with which we can turn transactions around. A recent example was an order we took from a shop that was dispatched only 6 minutes later. That’s amazing, not even Amazon can do that!”

“We also want to bring that benefit of turning over orders quickly to the larger retail community to help all parties within the supply chain to run a much slicker process,” says Walker. “Today this process is usually very labour intensive so by streamlining and taking the initiative to improve processes across the supply chain we can see big wins and increased sales volume without having to worry about having the personnel resources to handle it. Having a system in place that can easily integrate with others is a must for this to work in the future.”



## Modern ERP helps win business

The increased speed of order fulfilment is not the only competitive advantage that the company has noticed since implementing Epicor ERP. "Another advantage we have over other distributors is visible in our modern IT platform," says Kinnon.

He continues, "For example, during Christmas last year we received a referral from one of the biggest grocers to integrate a new supplier with their system. At the time neither the supplier nor any other UK distributor was in a position to fulfil the technical requirements. Because of our fully integrated and automated processes we could easily help them. Without Epicor in place we would not have got that piece of business. The flexibility of the system, and the ability for us to fine tune processes without having to outsource any development work, continuously gives us a real competitive edge. Because we can easily and quickly change a business process or the way we communicate with a retailer or supplier it gives us the ability to stay ahead of the game."

"One of the main reasons we chose Epicor ERP is that it's so flexible," says Walker. "Service Connect provides a huge competitive advantage over other comparable solutions. It means that we have the flexibility to connect with other systems, and it means ease of development. It's so easy to do things around the system without having to do major bespoke development work. And by continuously keeping up-to-date with upgrades we are going to make sure we don't fall behind again."

He concludes, "It is inspiring to work with Epicor having dealt with some of the other ERP providers for the last twenty years. It is enlightening to see the 'other side' with Epicor where we now can operate seamlessly without assistance."

## 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](http://www.epicor.com).



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