

## Rugs With Flair

### A Flair for Distribution

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#### Rugs With Flair

- Rug distributor based in Manchester, established in 1984
- Offers a diverse collection of rugs from cutting edge concepts to more traditional designs and in many textures and qualities
- Fastest growing rug importer in the UK, sourcing rugs from India, China and Middle East

#### Challenges

- Previous software systems unable to keep up with the company's growth
- Inadequate stock control capabilities causing lack of visibility
- Attempts to customise and provide further functionality to previous systems only slowed things down further

#### Solution

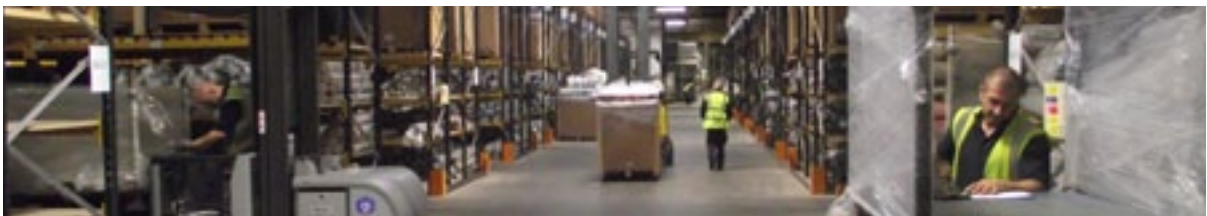
- Microsoft Dynamics has enabled cost reduction throughout the business
- Accurate stock control & order management capabilities including electronic integration with partners
- Improved data management helps make more accurate and effective business management decisions

When Rugs With Flair (Flair Floorings Ltd) identified that its existing bespoke IT systems could not provide the capabilities needed to support the business effectively, the company turned to Microsoft Dynamics. With the additional support of Qurius UK, Rugs With Flair now has a system that provides increased efficiency, automation and accuracy throughout the order management, warehousing and distribution processes.

#### Meeting the Distribution Challenge

Formed in 1984 Rugs With Flair has unrivalled experience and expertise in the distribution of rugs. Offering a diverse collection of rugs and accessories from cutting edge concepts to more traditional designs and in many textures and qualities, Rugs With Flair is able to meet the demands of all its customer's tastes and budgets. Rugs are mostly sourced and imported from India, China and the Middle Eastern region and distributed throughout the UK to trade wholesalers and retailers.

Since its formation, the company has enjoyed sustained growth based on its ability to source and supply good quality rugs at competitive prices. By 2004, the company had reached a point with its IT systems where a change was needed to meet this growth. Mark Winter is Financial Controller and is heavily involved with the IT department. He explains, "We were using an Access-based system which we had developed ourselves and had been



adding to on a regular basis. Until that time it was getting the job done, but by 2003 it was proving to be inflexible and incapable of keeping up with the growth of the business. The biggest issue was in the warehouse where there wasn't an adequate stock control system. This meant we were never certain of what was in the warehouse, or where to find products that we knew were there. Any additional functionality that we put into the system only slowed it down even more, so we made the decision to identify and install a modern, enterprise-wide software solution that would support the business more effectively for many more years to come."

Rugs With Flair invited several suppliers to demonstrate their products, including systems from Sage and SAP as well as other bespoke systems. Winter explains why they chose Microsoft Dynamics. "We hadn't known much about Dynamics before this process, but the fact that it is backed by Microsoft is enough to have quite a lot of confidence in its future. The system itself seemed to be a more balanced product, providing advanced, seamless tools for all areas of the business, particularly in distribution. We felt that some of the other offerings were basically accounting systems with other bits of functionality tacked on."

After the initial implementation, Rugs With Flair felt it needed more help in order to benefit from the system. "When we talked to Qurius, we were very impressed with the level of support and expertise they could provide and the understanding they had of distribution. We then worked closely with them to identify possible improvements and formed an upgrade path that would allow us to improve our business processes by using the functionality in Microsoft Dynamics, rather than creating cumbersome and unnecessary modifications," says Winter.

### Handling Diversity

One of the main challenges in the rug distribution business is the diversity of the product range. Each rug range comes with different designs and different colours and all in different sizes. Having a system that can identify and catalogue all these products is essential for Rugs With Flair as there is very little margin for error in a hugely competitive and price sensitive industry. "Order management was one area where we felt there did need to be a bit of customisation as it was very specific to our

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business. It is essential to make sure we take orders accurately as this drives all other areas of the supply chain. We have a hugely diverse range of products that are, on the face of it, fairly similar, so we worked with Qurius to adapt the order entry screen to better reflect our product range and ensure we take the right orders. The flexibility of Microsoft Dynamics made this very easy and this is a customisation that will not affect future upgrades," says Winter.

Managing the order cycle and improving forecasting are also key requirements for Rugs With Flair. Mark Winter explains, "We source most of our products from thousands of miles away and they come to us via container ships. This means we have a lead time of several months, which puts a huge pressure on our stock control and forecasting. The inventory management system delivered some key benefits very quickly, particularly in enabling us to know exactly what we had in stock and identifying what we were most likely to require three or four months into the future."

He adds, "15 years ago, the warehouse had people who knew exactly what products we had and where they were. But as the business grew and these people moved on, we started to lose sight of our stock. We have now implemented a bar coding system, which integrates seamlessly with the system and has given us 100% accuracy in our order fulfilment. The system also helps with those customers and suppliers that prefer to trade electronically."

To conclude, Mark Winter says, "Partnering with Qurius to support our implementation has allowed us to generate some significant benefits that we were struggling to achieve before. We now have better electronic integration with trading partners, an accurate stock control system, better order management and a far more effective schedule planning and forecasting capability. Microsoft Dynamics itself is a robust and reliable system that is helping us to reduce costs throughout the business, gives us better data management to help make more accurate and effective business management decisions. Overall Qurius and Microsoft Dynamics have helped us to continue the profitable growth of our distribution business."

