

Riverford organic vegetables
veg box home delivery



Riverford Organic Vegetables Ltd use Aspin Interactive's hosted CRM and order processing systems to unify their growing franchise network and increase customer sales.

The solution was to deploy a web-based system that would unify the entire business process for franchisees and telesales staff, and integrate with Riverford's public website

Overview

Riverford Organic Vegetables Ltd operates their Riverford Home Delivery (RHD) service through a set of over 25 franchises operating across the south of England and is continuing to expand nationally.

Each franchisee covers one or more designated regions of the country. They are solely responsible in ensuring that the Riverford end customer receives the correct Riverford Home Delivery on the correct day.

Customer orders are typically placed and maintained directly with their local franchisee, however order requirements can additionally be fed through to Riverford's Telesales team.

Traditionally, franchisee orders come in to Riverford by fax and then had to be manually entered in to Riverford's Sage Line 100 accounting system. Nearly all new customers contacted Riverford and were then re-directed to the relevant franchisee.



The franchisee buys daily from Riverford the required produce to fulfil all of that day's orders. The franchisee then sells each order directly on to the customer. A franchisee's daily order is delivered over night to a cold storage 'hub' ready for the franchisee to collect the following morning and to deliver that day.

Franchisees maintained their customer details and orders through a stand-alone Microsoft Access database installed upon their own PC. The Access application enabled the franchisee to build up a 'round sheet' for each day displaying every order in sequence that they were to be delivered. Customer invoices were also created by the system.

Every franchisee managed their accounts through a simple accounting facility within the access database system. Franchisees had to regularly send financial information to Riverford by fax or sometimes email.

Franchisees were running several different versions of the Microsoft Access system and had various strategies for data back-up.

Business issues

- Sales and marketing analysis was poor.
- Could not see complete picture of sales performance.
- Needed to improve customer service.
- Improve the flow of information through the business processes.
- Improve the management of customer information.
- Improve customer communication channels.
- Increase access to customer information.

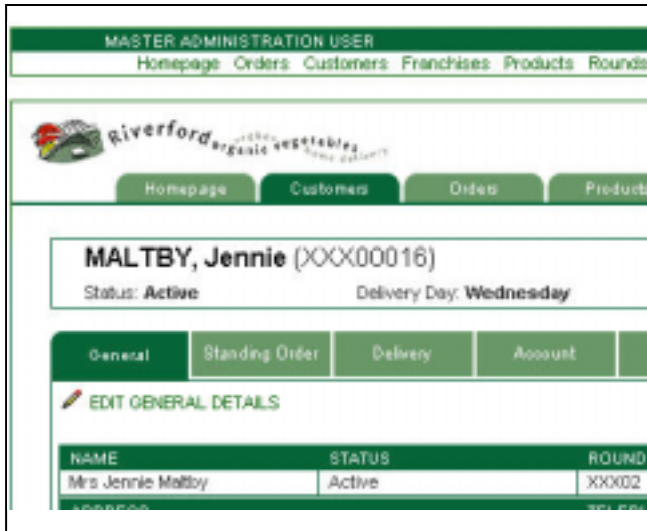
IT Issues

- Difficult to maintain software across franchisees' PCs.
- Loss of business due to PC and software problems.
- Loss of data due to computer failure.

Key Objectives

- Centralised system for franchisees to manage customers and orders.
- Consolidation of data (customers, products, orders, stock requirements and accounting.)
- Improve method of managing territories and rounds.
- Monitor performance of franchisees
- Automatic updates to Sage accounting system

The Solution



Centralised franchisee account and customer administration

Provide an interface for the administration of customer and order details for Franchisees and Riverford staff. Access to the RHD online service needs to be through a standard web browser, available on all major platforms including MS Windows, Apple MacOS and Linux.

Automatic updates to Sage accounting system

Provides Riverford staff with the ability to be able to update the product database on the live website from Sage Line 100

Collect information for use in marketing and analysis

Riverford is able to review information on the customers of the franchises such as orders, warnings, complaints and suggestions as well as contact details.

Create and print Round Sheets

The RHD Extranet allows users to print round sheets with all relevant information as required to make a delivery, including warnings and order information.

Generate picking lists from orders received from Franchises

Riverford warehouse pickers are given printed predictive and actual picking lists generated from the RHD extranet system. Giving the warehouse teams more information to prepare customer orders in advance.

Support multiple regions for Franchises

Franchisees are able to manage more than one region. Franchisees are able to handle customers from multiple regions collectively through the same interface without having to log into separate systems.

Report Generation

The system allows both franchisees and administrative staff to easily generate reports on demand, giving them vital information on many aspects of the business.

Round Sheets

The RHD extranet system generates printed round sheets with all relevant information for delivery drivers to make a delivery, including warnings and order information. The round sheets are generated in the order of drop sequence created by the franchisee.

Mail-merge

The RHDx mail-merge system is a simple and easy to use facility to enter text, which is then added to a pre-designed letter template and produces a PDF to be printed out. This is extremely useful for customer group contact with regards product recalls or special deals.

Reporting

Riverford have the ability to generate reports and analyse various types of data collected by the RHD extranet.

Accounting Information

The website system allows franchisees to export and download relevant customer data onto their local computer for importing into an accounting package.

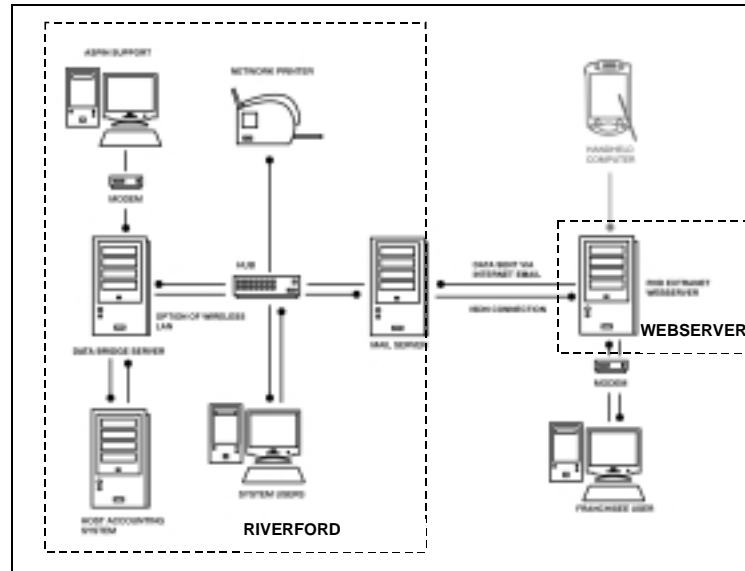
Stock Order requests

Franchisee stock orders are sent to Riverford by the RHD Extranet system and imported into the accounting system, meanwhile warehouse dispatch is given picking lists to fulfil the orders and send to the relevant delivery hub.

System Overview

The RHDx is a centrally stored application on a single system that is accessible by both the Franchisees and Riverford staff. The interface is an HTML based system that is accessed through a web browser.

This hosted service means that all Franchisees are able to access the features that the previous MS Access RHD system offered, over an internet connection, without the need for the existing MS Access software to be installed on their computer. There is no longer an issue of version control and support on an individual machine basis. Data is now transmitted between the Franchisees' online system and Riverford's accounting server.



Hardware overview of the RHD Extranet

The DataBridge server enables customer, order and product data to be relayed between many host accounting systems. Data is formatted by the DataBridge into a structure that is required by the Sage Line 100 system. This may require Riverford's Sage developer to modify Sage to import and export data. However, the DataBridge will accommodate required fields by the use of a mutually agreed data format.



As the data will contain sensitive and private information the data will be encrypted and emailed from the webservice to the DataBridge server. This process creates a fail-safe system ensuring that data is not lost in transit.

After the webservice encrypts and emails data, it waits for an acknowledgement from the DataBridge server that it has received the email. The DataBridge does this by sending a return email. A record can then be kept of all transactions between the web server and the DataBridge. Once a data email has been received by the DataBridge it then un-packages and decrypts the data, which is then copied to a shared directory on the DataBridge server. This directory is a Linux Samba Share for Windows, so Sage is easily able to locate and import the data.

To export the data the process is simply reversed.

Public Website

The public website was re-launched at the beginning of 2004 by Aspin Interactive, and offers customers a continually expanding online service. Most notable is the website's integration with the Franchise Extranet. This enables customer to manage their standing orders and make modifications which are then replicated in the franchise customer management system.

Summary

Riverford now have a system that provides them with a clear picture of sales and franchisee performance, franchisees have a robust system that can be operated on any Internet connection and most importantly: customers have benefited in a more response channel of communication and a higher level of customer service. However key to the success of Riverford is the level of commitment from Riverford staff and franchisees and the quality of products provided. Riverford has made a significant investment in technology and software, which is not typical of their business sector, however, they have seen an immediate return on the investment as they have removed the key problem areas in their order and fulfilment process.