



Beacon of Success

Barry Group is one of Ireland's leading wholesale and distribution groups. Operating from its state-of-the-art headquarters in Mallow, the company employs over 230 people and, supported by IT solutions provider Sanderson, provides a wide range of services, from delivery to a dedicated sales and marketing team, for more than 1,000 customers.

Under the dynamic leadership of Managing Director Jim Barry, the company is responsible for the franchises: Costcutter (supermarket and convenience retailer); Carry Out (specialist off-licence); and Quik Pick (smaller grocery offering). Barry Group also supplies the pub trade, as well as the off-licence and catering sectors, and trades internationally with over 20 countries; both import and export.

Having worked with Sanderson and its wholesale IT solution, Swords, for over 20 years, Barry Group added new online ordering, RF and CRM functionality to great success. Dramatically improved picking efficiency, increased sales and better customer service have all been delivered as a result. The Barry Group took this experience into its latest

strategic venture - the challenging chilled distribution market. The 'Chill Chain', as it is known in the wholesale industry, is notoriously difficult to manage because chilled produce has to be kept below a certain temperature from source to consumer. "Maintaining the integrity of the chill chain is absolutely key," explains Head of IT, Peter O'Sullivan. "Otherwise you're in contravention of health laws. It's not an easy business."

Beyond the temperature constraints, cold meats, liquids and other consumables have an incredibly limited shelf life, so time is of the essence. "The way the chilled distribution works is unique," says O'Sullivan. "The standard method of raising orders is just too slow; customers need to be able to look at the shelf in their shop,

Case study at a glance

About Barry Group

Leading Irish wholesale and distribution group

Challenges

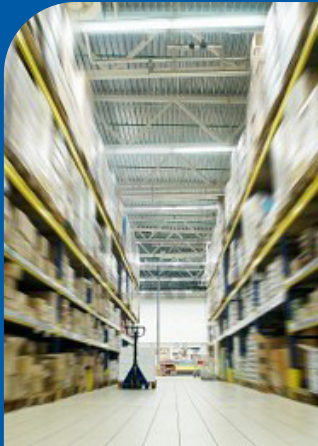
- Business expansion into 'chill chain' distribution
- Improve web ordering facility
- Integrate with 3rd-party system
- Improve customer service
- Provide customer reporting

Solutions

- Swords Wholesale Distribution System
- Sanderson Web Portal
- Online Ordering
- Mobile CRM
- Radio Frequency (RF) System

Benefits

- Continual business growth
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Successful expansion into chilled distribution
- More responsive, user-friendly web ordering facilities
- More efficient warehouse management
- Improved order turnaround
- Accurate sales reporting



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Head of IT

and make a decision there and then on the right product to order.”

A highly visual, user-friendly and efficient web ordering portal was required to handle such a difficult supply chain. And with competitors already launching web-ordering systems for chilled distribution, the company could not afford to rest on its laurels. For Barry Group, there was only one choice; opting for Swords to lead its new business venture.

Fit for purpose

“Other IT systems can go past their sell by date, but the Sanderson solution has never gone stale,” says O’Sullivan. “It is always fit for purpose for us because Sanderson don’t stand still, they continue to develop the product and create solutions that make sense for our business.”

Consequently, Sanderson has been pivotal in launching the company’s new chilled distribution business, through the development of the web-ordering portal, Beacon, (Barrys Easy Access Central Ordering Network), that offers Barry Group customers a three-day order turnaround time. Barry Group operates a ‘pick-to-zero’ system using

a third party distributor, Cuisine de France, and its chill facility in Dublin. Customers use tablets supplied by Barry Group to raise orders via the Swords system; these are processed at the chill facility the next day and delivered the following morning. The Sanderson system interfaces with Cuisine de France’s own ERP system and auto-converts transactions into purchase orders, so they can be picked and dispatched by Cuisine de France, with each link in the chain monitored for a smooth service.

“It’s much easier for our customers to raise orders now. They don’t even have to be in the shop, they can be sitting at home at midnight on Sunday and still place an order; the system is always accessible,” enthuses O’Sullivan. “The web solution is also completely responsive, so it works on any mobile device. That flexibility is a huge benefit.”

Customer reaction to the new offering has been incredibly positive: “The appetite for it and speed of penetration has impressed us. They love using the Sanderson web portal, and keep asking if they can use it for everything; Beacon is now their



channel of choice. Not only that, we've also won some significant new independent business on the strength of our chill offering."

Saving time and effort

The interactive and accessible interface has hugely improved the opportunity for Barry Group to offer advice to customers, and crucially to upsell. There are sections designated to promotions, deals and 'must-stock' items. With only one click, customers can create an order of all these must-stock items, or indeed reload their previous order, saving valuable time and effort; the order can then be easily customised.

The Sanderson web portal, Beacon, also allows for greater customer control and business insight, providing accurate sales reports for individual products. This helps customers to manage their own inventory and reduce wastage by advising them to buy certain quantities of only the best-selling product lines.

The web portal isn't the only aspect of the Sanderson solution that has enabled the business to thrive: "The Sanderson solution handles

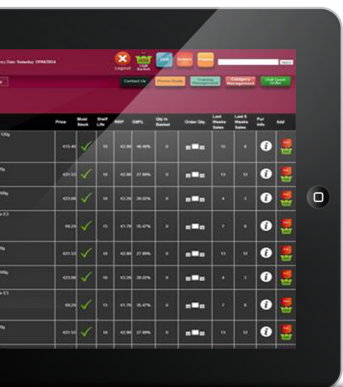
stock control, logistics and central billing. It's much more than just a warehouse management system," explains O'Sullivan. "Alongside the CRM functionality and Beacon, it controls our daily lives inside the warehouse; from goods in, through to stock control, picking, packing, despatch and invoicing."

Swords has also been instrumental in delivering on The Barry Group's Customer Charter. "We tweak every aspect of our business to put the customer and their needs first," says O'Sullivan, citing the complaints module within the mobile CRM system as a favourite aspect. "Before, complaints could potentially slip under the radar and get lost, but now we can manage, process and ultimately resolve complaints. It's allowed us to close all complaints within three days; if it can't be solved by then, Jim Barry himself takes a personal interest and rectifies the problem. It means we can love our customer a little more," he adds. "We've also implemented the 'Surveys' module, which is a fantastic tool for store reports. When one of our account managers goes into a shop they can use forms in Swords CRM to review things like store standards, HACCP and so on."

No large-scale implementation is entirely problem-free, especially when it comes to a supply chain as nuanced as the chill chain, but Peter O'Sullivan recalls that Sanderson quickly dealt with the few obstacles that stood in the way of progress. "The variable weight of products was a big issue for us; we hadn't anticipated the discrepancies in the weight of, say, chicken breasts," O'Sullivan recalls. "So Sanderson configured the software around our exact needs. Also, suppliers of fresh produce operate on very different schedules; in fact, some only supply two days a week, and a pick-to-zero environment doesn't give them flexibility, so we had to factor that in, making some products only available for order on certain days."

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Head of IT



Project success

Careful planning was vital for the project's success. After conducting extensive research, the Barry Group adopted industry best practice for the chill chain and with the help of Sanderson, developed it further, enabling the company to offer more than its competitors. "We took evidence from the market to find the best approach and then pushed it to offer greater functionality and product categories for our customers," says O'Sullivan. "The number of categories will be increased still further in the very near future."

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O'Sullivan is quick to credit the Sanderson partnership as fundamental to the success of the Beacon project: "We spent three months in the planning stage, with Sanderson consultants

visiting us in person to discuss issues and things that we needed, which ensured success from day one. Sanderson offer us stability, continuity and flexibility. They're always open to developing new things for us, and at the same time are always working on core product development."

Indeed, with Beacon, the future looks bright for Barry Group. Plans are in the pipeline to expand the online ordering system to include all ranges, from launching ambient later this year, to tackling the equally complicated frozen produce supply chain. "Beacon will be the biggest development over the next few years, it's a real strategic move for us," says O'Sullivan.

Providing better customer service, maximising pick rates, managing the warehouse and improving efficiencies across the business, the Sanderson solution is continuing to add value to the company, and the new Beacon portal is enabling Barry Group to see real business growth in a tumultuous economy.

"We wouldn't have a chill business without Beacon, and we wouldn't have Beacon without Sanderson," concludes O'Sullivan. "It's been a game changer for us. Beacon has become a one-stop shop and the most visible way to interact with our customers."

About Barry Group



With a domestic and international presence, Barry Group is a leading name in the wholesale industry, trading with over 20 countries worldwide.

Established in 1955, the family-owned company employs over 230 employees at its state-of-the-art headquarters in Mallow, Ireland. Today, with Jim Barry at the helm, the company continues to thrive, supplying to the pub trade, off licences, the catering sector and the Costcutter, Carry Out and Quik Pick franchises in Ireland.



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