

e-Xact

The No.1 product information service for Suppliers of Building Materials.

Your products can be viewed in over 3000 merchant branches, including the major national and leading independent Builders' Merchants.

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- A great value web-based PR service - send unlimited news items for publication on the e-Xact website - free for e-Xact subscribers
- Free editorial in e-mail newsletters
- Used on websites, at head of ce and at point of sale
- Fully searchable product information and document databases
- No more 'customised' spreadsheets - a 'one-stop-shop' for all your customers' data requirements
- The key to successful electronic trading

If you are a supplier of building materials or a builders merchant who would like to find out what e-Xact can do for you,

call [01753 501000](tel:01753501000) or
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Ridgeons e-Commerce Platform Depends on e-Xact Online

Business Problem

Quick and easy access to accurate, up-to-date building product data is a long term and ongoing problem in the construction industry. Independent builders merchant Ridgeons needed to provide product data to its trade customers online in an e-commerce website but was hampered by a lack of comprehensive product data from suppliers within its business. The data available to Ridgeons was merely sufficient to sell the product; however, effective online selling requires that the product data presented to be sufficiently exhaustive to provide buyers with all the information they need.

Background

Ridgeons, which began in the backroom of Cyril Ridgeon's home in Cambridge in 1911, has grown steadily to become one of the UK's largest independent timber and builders merchants. Its mission remains the same as in Cyril's day: namely, to make it easier for customers to do business. Ridgeons aims to give exceptional customer service and advice at every step. Ridgeons is committed to its customers, employees, suppliers and business partners as well as to the local communities in which they live and trade.

In the last 100 years Ridgeons' client base has grown to include property development, the public sector, general building, plumbing and heating. Its commitment to excellent service and to an outstanding depth and breadth of stock availability remains the same. Its extensive range covers bricks, timber solutions, kitchens and bathrooms, plumbing and heating, and paints and xings to meet all project needs across the eastern region.

Obtaining comprehensive product data has been a continuous issue for many years. In the past, Ridgeons collected product data by contacting each supplier separately, although the data was often very basic or incomplete. Once received, the data was integrated into the group stock inventory management system.

With the expansion of the business, Ridgeons has committed to an internal project in launching a professional e-commerce website to support its suppliers while increasing group turnover.



A modern, professional e-Commerce platform depends on rich data to provide all the required information to the purchaser. Kevin Babbage, e-commerce Manager for Ridgeons, says “Usually, developing an e-commerce website takes 6 months. However, to obtain required product data from suppliers it takes a minimum of 1 year.”

SOLUTION

In order to launch the e-Commerce project, Ridgeons needed an efficient, effective, accurate and speedy way of obtaining product data. Currently the market has many solutions which provide supplier product data. However, most solutions provide product data in pockets rather than as a total solution providing comprehensive product data.

The COINS e-Xact Online data portal is a powerful and comprehensive hub that provides builder’s merchant’s product data in one single database. The data portal includes over 220,000 building-related products with data from the key suppliers to the builders merchant industry. The e-Xact Online data portal was the natural choice for Ridgeons since many of its key suppliers were already customers of e-Xact Online.

High on functionality, e-Xact Online takes a managed database approach to the information it receives, meaning that the source data (such as technical data sheets, product descriptions, etc.) submitted by suppliers and manufacturers is automatically processed, validated and restructured into a managed database. This information is then published in a standard format regardless of its original arrangement. e-Xact Online works on the principle that it is more economical for information to be manipulated once (by e-Xact Online) than several times over by each user of the data.

BENEFITS OF THE E-XACT SOLUTION

- **Fast Track of Data:** Rather than the merchant having to contact each supplier, all the product data can be obtained from one single source.
- **Time / Cost:** Being able to obtain data from one single source reduces time and cost over having to collect data individually. Additionally, it helps speed up data projects.
- **Reduction in Resource Time:** Collecting product data from individual suppliers places a heavy burden on the merchant’s staff resource time. A single source of data managed by e-Xact reduces Ridgeons’ resource overhead.
- **Easy Format:** As the data is presented in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format, it is very straightforward and easy to use.
- **Structured and Standard Platform:** The data portal service takes unstructured data from the supplier and structures it in a standard format that can then be used by both the builder’s merchant and the supplier/ manufacturer.

Kevin states ‘At Ridgeons we are enhancing our digital presence in order to make it easier for customers to trade with us. To achieve our online goals we require informative rich product information from suppliers. When you deal with hundreds of suppliers this poses a major resource challenge. I chose to work with e-Xact Online to help collect the product data I need, as a large number of our suppliers provide the e-Xact data portal with enhanced product information. Using e-Xact has saved me substantial time and cost, as I have not needed to approach every supplier directly for their information.’