

Customer Success Story



Acsellerate Serves as a Powerful Opportunity Manager for Irongate and its Customers

Company:
Irongate Group
www.ironagategroup.co.uk

Location:
Derby, UK

Industry:
Business Supplies and Services

Business Challenges:
Required a software solution that was user-friendly and gave personnel real-time access to critical customer and sales team information

Business Benefits:

- Improves overall customer retention levels
- Ensures effective management of new business pipeline
- Gives the company the competitive edge
- Facilitates proactive account management

“Acsellerate was so much easier to use and gave us the information we needed so much faster”

After nearly 30 years in the stationery business, Martin White knows one thing for certain: When it comes to acquiring, retaining and maximizing the value of customers, information is power.

As national accounts sales manager for Irongate Group, White plays a key role at one of the country's top stationers, an industry powerhouse that has been able to post consistent, year-on-year growth, no matter what the economy has thrown its way, thanks to an increasingly diverse product mix and a sales-oriented culture that puts a premium on new business development, proactive customer management and world-class service.

It's a model that not only calls for disciplined management and aggressive, multi-faceted marketing but also demands a strong technology backbone. That's why White and the rest of the Irongate sales team are enthusiastic users of the ECi Acsellerate sales intelligence and CRM solution.

Despite being hit by a general business downturn of historic dimensions and shrinking demand for traditional office supplies, Irongate is growing—from annual turnover of £13 million when White came on board five years ago to a current run rate of some £17 million, which, he says, is down to a great team performance.

That impressive track record, says White, is also due to the company's ability to win new business, retain its existing business and proactively sell a growing range of products and services that includes office furniture, printing and promotional products, document management, workwear and PPE items and more in addition to traditional business supplies.

It's a powerful model but White is the first to admit that it simply would not be possible without the kind of user-friendly, real-time access to critical customer and sales team information that Acsellerate provides.

“Acsellerate gives us incredibly valuable information,” he says. “Every morning, I look at month to date and quarter to date sales and track customers who have been inactive for the past 60 or 90 days or where margins have fallen below 10%. Acsellerate allows us to proactively manage our existing customer base and effectively manage our new business pipeline.”

White and all the management team looked long and hard at their options before implementing Acsellerate nearly two years ago. “We tried both Sugar and salesforce.com but Acsellerate was so much easier to use and gave us the information we needed so much faster,” he reports.

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New business development is the lifeblood of any organization and the power of Acsellerate’s Customer Relationship Management function earns particularly high marks from White.

“We get leads from a whole range of sources—cold calling, databases from our marketing team for particular geography or vertical markets, and so on—and there’s a large team of aggressive salespeople —our national accounts team, regional teams, product specialists in areas like furniture, printing and PPE—who are all out chasing business,” he explains. “If we didn’t have a way of managing all that activity and a program that was giving us real-time information, we would run into all sorts of problems.”

The good news for White and all the sales team is that with Acsellerate, they’re spending far more time bringing in new customers than trying to avoid stepping on each others’ toes. Even better, once those customers come onboard, the information Acsellerate is able to generate keeps them onboard.

“Acsellerate is absolutely vital to our customer retention efforts,” says White. “The information it generates on customer activity forms the central focal point of our quarterly business reviews

with key accounts and allows us to show them new ways they can save money or highlight additional product categories where we can meet their needs.”

“There’s so much competition in the market today and we’re always looking for an edge,” he continues. “Acsellerate enables us to demonstrate to our customers that we’re proactively managing their accounts and looking for ways to help them maximize the value of their office spend.”

Before Irongate implemented Acsellerate they were using Sugar to manage sales and prospecting but, recalls White, it was far less successful.

“Our people didn’t use Sugar very well because it wasn’t very user-friendly,” he explains. “Acsellerate is very intuitive and you can get all the information you need very quickly. I find it much easier than Salesforce and much improved on Sugar.”

It helps, too, that Acsellerate comes with excellent training and technical support. “When we started with Acsellerate I picked it up very quickly because it is so intuitive, but there’s also a series of online Webinars that were very useful,” says White. “And while we’ve had very few glitches with the program since going live, Acsellerate responded very

promptly and positively when there was a problem.”

Ask White just how much of a difference Acsellerate has made for Irongate and he doesn’t have to think too long for an answer. “We simply would not be in the position that we are today because we wouldn’t have the data we need to operate the way we do,” he says. “Acsellerate is all about managing opportunities—for our customers to save money, for our sales team to add new business and for our company overall to grow profitably. When it comes to sales intelligence and CRM, Acsellerate is the best I’ve seen. It’s that simple.”

www.irongategroup.co.uk



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