



## Increased accuracy. Streamlined business processes. Significant time saving.

### Situation

Nella Cutlery imports, manufactures and distributes food-service equipment and supplies, provides a knife-sharpening service and operates a retail outlet and showroom.

### Challenge

Separate systems managed the various sections of the business. Some processes were manual, while others were automated – and none were integrated with each other.

### Solution

Nella implemented Blue Link Elite to manage all business functions – apart from one that was integrated with third-party software. Subsequent to successful system implementation, Blue Link was also commissioned to provide an improved version of the outstanding function, integrated with Nella's Elite system.

### Results

The implementation has been successful in achieving Nella's objectives of streamlining time-consuming business processes, and providing accurate and timely information to management and staff.

### Situation

Nella Cutlery (Nella) was founded in 1952, serving the food industry. The company distributes a full line of food-processing equipment and supplies, which are used in supermarkets, delicatessens, convenience stores and restaurants. The company's products are also used by meat purveyors and other establishments dealing with food products. In addition, Nella provides service and repair on the equipment, and delivers a unique, professional knife-sharpening service, which provides chefs and cooks with replacement knives, delivered and exchanged on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Nella also operates a retail outlet and a large showroom, in a separate location from head office.

### Challenge

Separate systems (some manual, some automated) were in place to manage business operations. None of the systems were interconnected.

As the business expanded, various systems were created to manage the operation's individual parts. For example, a DOS-based invoicing package was used to manage billing for equipment sales and supplies, while a separate route-management system was introduced for scheduling and billing the knife sharpening service, and tracking all receivables. In the meantime, service and repair activities were tracked manually on paper, and invoiced using Excel spreadsheets. At the back end, a popular DOS-based accounting software handled basic accounting and accounts payable.

Because the various systems were not integrated, Nella performed a significant amount of duplicate data entry, and had to manually combine reports from the separate systems in order to evaluate company performance.

Nella wanted a system that would remove the need for duplicate data entry, and would also provide quick, easy and accurate access to key business information, such as sales history, customer service and financial information.

### Solution

Nella considered several possible solutions. The need for different types of invoicing for the various operations – wholesale, retail, services and knife sharpening – complicated the selection process. The company considered a dedicated service/repair system, but was deterred by the lack of integration and the package cost, in addition to the need to combine it with separate, upgraded accounting software.

Nella decided on Blue Link Elite as the software solution that could deliver on all the company's needs, while remaining within budget. The company therefore implemented Blue Link Elite to manage all but one of the business functions. For the remaining function (knife-sharpening service), the original Route Management System (RMS) was retained, using Blue Link custom-built integration at a detailed transaction level.

Following successful Blue Link Elite implementation across the other business functions, Nella then commissioned the company to replace the RMS third-party software. Blue Link subsequently wrote improved route management functionality directly into Nella's version of Blue Link Elite.

## Results

The implementation has been successful in achieving Nella's objectives of streamlining time-consuming business processes, and providing accurate and timely information to management and staff.

The Blue Link Service component was configured to handle the service and repair activities, replacing the combined manual and spreadsheet system. Previously unconnected functions, including order entry, invoicing, receivables and general accounting system, are now one, interconnected system.

The retail store (in a location remote from head office) is now on-line, using the Blue Link Point-Of-Sale component, which is hosted at Nella and accessed via the internet.

Comprehensive customer billing history for all levels of the business is stored in one central place.

Nella processes orders and invoices through a fast, user-friendly interface, which saves time and improves customer interaction. "Thanks to Blue Link Elite, we are able to give customers all the information required to expedite their order," says Ralph Nella.

Monthly time savings – realized by eliminating duplicate entry, manual tracking and invoicing, and maintenance of separate systems – is estimated at several person-days. Beyond that time saving, the potential for keypunch errors on transferring data between systems is also eliminated.

The Blue Link system has also reduced administration time and delays.

Nella employees save several hours every week, because they can quickly recall previous transac-

tions to the screen: information lookups that used to take minutes (sometimes hours) now take mere seconds. The Blue Link system enables a faster response time in searching customer files, and in searches for different items available in all modules, such as payments recorded per day and inventory items recorded by customer.

There is improved control over receivables and cash flow, because the receivables collection process is easier and more effective, with all the necessary data to complete a collection call being available in real time.

Wendy Kippen of Nella says, "The detail level available with the drill-down feature is a huge benefit. Previously, we didn't have access to the inventory on an invoice, so we didn't know what we were trying to collect without going to pull out the paper copy of the invoice. Now, we simply drill down and reproduce the invoice on screen, while making the collection call."

Additionally, a statement can be produced at any time of the month.

Nella employees have also noted the new system's benefits:

- multiple users can do the same activity simultaneously, such as order entry and payment records;
- data entry by code or name has reduced user errors;
- password protection for different levels of the various modules ensures better system security;
- reports exported to Excel can be fine tuned as needed; and
- technical support accessibility and availability is highly appreciated.

Summing up, Wendy Kippen confirms: "Nella is significantly more efficient since the implementation of Blue Link Elite; and the benefits certainly more than justify the investment made in the solution."

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