

fairfaxmeadow

putting great meat on the menu

Case Study



About

The beginnings of Fairfax Meadow can be traced back to founder Gerry Wensley's acquisition of five butcher's shops in North London in 1974.

The success of these shops led to a series of mergers and acquisitions, and Fairfax Meadow has grown to be the UK's largest catering butcher, headquartered in Derby and turning over £162m (2016). It employs 650 people across four sites in the UK.

It supplies fine meats to customers as diverse as Mitchells & Butler, Gordon Ramsay, The Ivy Collection, Greene King, Cunard ships, Marriott and Hilton, and also contract caterers like Aramark and festivals.

Tony Carlisle is its Head of IT & Systems, and has been with Fairfax Meadow since 1989. He is responsible for all aspects of the business' IT strategy.

The Challenge

Says Carlisle, "We had been accepting orders electronically for about 25 years, and managed these through a series of ever-bigger on-premise systems, but the order volumes were simply becoming too large to be handled by any of these.

"I was also concerned about the on-premise stability, and our ability to grow the business without increasing processing headcount. It was evident we needed a robust, cloud-based system to manage the orders".

The solution they sought had to:

- Be able to integrate with all customers' and distributors' ordering systems
- Be paperless for electronic orders
- Provide a reliable audit trail
- Be stable and reliable
- Smoothly handle in excess of 900,000 sales orders a year
- Be cloud-based

And it had to be able to scale with the business as it grew.



I would definitely recommend the Fourth system to Food Service suppliers looking to increase order handling capacity without adding headcount."

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The Solution

Carlisle looked at a number of systems to deal with this challenge.

“Of all the systems we looked at, Fourth was the solution that stood out, not only because it met all our requirements, but because unlike the others it was hospitality-specific and many of our customers were already integrated to their supplier platform. In fact, the bulk of operators and distributors are on Fourth’s platform”

Fairfax Meadow migrated each customer one-by-one to Fourth’s purchase-to-pay platform, testing as they went along.



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Since implementation of the Fourth system, it has played a valuable part in helping Fairfax Meadow grow from a turnover of less than £50m to the £162m+ they turn over today.

“Ten years ago, a quarter of our business was via electronic ordering. Now it’s 75%, and we have been able to grow order volumes – and therefore business – while simultaneously reducing the headcount associated with manual processes”, says Carlisle.

With Fourth, Fairfax Meadow can:

Manage by exception: “All incoming and outgoing documents are electronic, there’s a reliable audit trail so any anomalies can be spotted easily”.

Grow the business: “We can take more orders as we don’t have to key them all – Fourth technology takes care of that”.

Save time: All documentation generated automatically.

Save admin: “It saves tonnes of administration – no more keying, no more telephone time”.

Be more accurate: In both deliveries and invoicing.

Save paper: This has been all but eliminated in Sales.

Be paid more quickly: Automating the process means fewer errors and queries, which means we can be paid more quickly”.

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Conclusion



Our Sales Order Processing is underpinned by Fourth, and we definitely get a good return on investment. Without Fourth we wouldn't be able to take on so many new customers while maintaining staffing levels."



99.99% of the time the Fourth platform ticks along - Fourth goes to a lot of trouble to set up all the links between its platform and the myriad of both buyer and supplier systems. Their knowledge of all these different systems, requirements and format is phenomenal."

Want to learn more about streamlining your order processing?

Call us at +44 (0) 8450 571 234
www.fourth.com

