



Causeway talks to The GAP Group

What the Causeway Tradex solution does for GAP Group

- Electronic document exchange
- Halves cost of invoice processing
- Proven ROI
- Easy to implement, use and manage
- Integration with existing back office systems
- Bank Level Security
- Unique business process support

Causeway talks to
Frank McGrory
Head of IT

Business: Plant and Tool Hire
Turnover: £88.5 million (2007/08)
Staff: 850
Solution: Causeway Tradex



“Without doubt, Causeway Tradex delivers a huge saving in time and cost for us. The basic cost of sending a document is only a few pence, giving us an instant saving on manual processing costs. Thanks to being involved with Tradex we also gained stronger links with Alfred McAlpine (now Carillion Infrastructure Services) and have since been granted sole supplier status, increasing our business with them from £1 million to £5 million.”

Frank McGrory

With more than 59 depots nationwide, GAP Group is the UK's largest independent plant and tool hire company. From saws to dumpers, and drills to excavators, GAP offers modern, market-leading products and tailored hire solutions.

Q1. What was the issue for your business?

As a result of being a supplier to some of the pioneers behind Tradex, GAP was invited to consider the adoption of electronic trading and to move away from paper based document exchange.

With its commitment to deadlines and the complex logistics of even the smallest projects, the construction industry is an ideal candidate for electronic trading in all its forms. Electronic exchange promises faster transfer of documents, process visibility, a clear audit trail and reduced administration costs.

Q2. Describe the process you undertook to find a solution

We were typical of many firms in the industry who wanted to make document transfer more efficient, but we were looking for solutions that would take us beyond the existing capabilities of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), which had already gone some way to show what was possible.

Having been involved in the early stages, when leading companies formed the initial Tradex community, we were impressed by the potential of the service. Having quantified the opportunity for savings and increased efficiency that Tradex brings, GAP Group pushed ahead to fully embrace this way of working.

Q3. Why Causeway?

Causeway Tradex is a proven, online, secure electronic trading document exchange that operates across the construction industry. It uses fully structured data to allow documents, such as invoices and orders, to be exchanged electronically between the many different back office systems used by each company's supply chain partners. It also allows document originators to determine who will have the authority to send documents and to precisely which company they are to be sent. Likewise, recipients can manage who is able to view, download, or administer the documents received.

Tradex was developed in conjunction with HM Revenue and Customs to meet the requirements of the EU Directive on e-invoicing and was a founding member of the 'Hub Alliance.' Industry information exchange standards, such as those developed by BASDA (Business Application Software Developers Association) and CITE (Construction Industry Trading Electronically) initiatives were used to ensure maximum flexibility.

Since inception, many other interface options have been established covering a wide range of purchasing and accounts applications, from Sage to RedSky and SAP. These allow companies of all sizes to establish a single interface with their trading partners across the construction industry.

Q4. How was the new implementation rolled-out?

We signed up to trial the Tradex service in March 2002 and set about developing an export file format that would allow us to trade directly with Alfred McAlpine (now Carillion Infrastructure Services). This took about three weeks and then, after some initial testing, we went live the following month. The good thing about Tradex is that it works for us and our customers with only a small investment. We quickly achieved our initial target of around 2,000 invoices to be traded online per month and since then the value of invoices we have exchanged electronically has exceeded £70m.

On a day-to-day level the service couldn't be simpler. Invoices are created and then the exported file is uploaded from the accounts department into Tradex. Indeed for all companies using Tradex, the service provides a single interface that manages the complex integration to the many different applications used by GAP's trading partners. This allows us to quickly expand our use of electronic trading without incurring the set up and maintenance costs associated with multiple interfaces. If we are to achieve the scale of adoption required within our industry then we need to work through a central hub rather than duplicating technology within each company.

Q5. What have you found to be the main benefits?

GAP has seen the cost of invoice processing reduced by more than half, whilst stronger links with key customers through the Tradex exchange have resulted in increased sales. The company estimates that the processing cost per invoice has reduced from around £12 to under £5 with a typical reduction in handling time from eight days to four days.

Time spent tracking paperwork is also significantly reduced, resulting in lower administrative costs, more timely access to information, greater visibility within internal departments and improved partnering service levels.

Tradex also supports many other value added services to help users achieve the objective of establishing an integrated supply chain information environment. These range from document status reporting to a multi-stage invoice approval workflow.

We have expanded our trading community to include companies such as Amec, Core UK and Morgan Est and continue to add new partners each year.

To find out how Causeway can help your business please call us today on

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