

Blackwoods

Blackwoods (Wesfarmers Industrial & Safety division), is one of the world's largest industrial distributors, with annual sales exceeding \$1.7 billion. Blackwoods distributes industrial tools, safety equipment, MRO products, mining and engineering supplies, power transmission and electrical components.

With over 5,000 staff across its 200 branches, Blackwoods offer their trade and corporate customers the most comprehensive product range for industrial supplies. The Blackwoods catalog is one of the largest in the world, and is aptly named 'The Bible' by industry players.



THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Blackwoods manages a catalog database of more than 300,000 items, 450,000 vendor items and over 750,000 relationships. As a result, the production of their catalog is an enormous undertaking.

The final publication is an A4 sized book comprising over 1,700 pages of high-quality color print. The process of collecting product information from suppliers is extremely labor intensive. A typical project team would include 16 employees working tirelessly for 2-3 years to engage with suppliers, source and cleanse product data, and then provide enriched catalog content to their printers for typesetting and pre-press work.

Despite creating huge volumes of product data with each edition, Blackwoods lacked the systems to maintain and manage its evolving catalog database. In 2001, Blackwoods decided to find a scalable solution for managing its e-catalog with the view that up-to-date product information would be available at all times to its employees and trading partners. Printed catalogs could be produced on demand, and the inefficiencies of collating data from suppliers manually would be eliminated.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Eliminate process inefficiencies in the catalog maintenance department
- Enable automated processing and validation of supplier catalogs and price updates
- Turn catalog advertising into a profitable business activity
- Reduce catalog production lead time from 36 to under 12 months
- Reduce catalog staffing costs by at least 50%
- Enrich web catalog for multiple electronic trading channels
- Improve the quality, accuracy and richness of catalog content for all business units
- Bring Blackwoods catalog management systems and process to the forefront of technology

THE INNOVIT SOLUTION

After an extended global search for solution providers, Innovit was chosen based upon:

- a) Quality of its strategic vision developed for Blackwoods
- b) Capabilities of the Innovit MDM catalog management system
- c) In-depth understanding of cataloging requirements for industrial distributors
- d) Expertise in product data management and supplier enablement.

The functionality delivered by Innovit MDM enabled Blackwoods to consolidate all catalog content from several legacy systems into a centralized repository (including text, images and documents). This delivered company-wide access to a 'comprehensive' set of high-quality product information for procurement, sales, marketing and customer service. Innovit MDM was then interfaced to Blackwood's ERP system and the online trading portal, which eliminated duplicate keying of product master data – a major cause of error for invoicing and ordering transactions.


Innovit MDM empowered Blackwoods staff with a sophisticated platform to cleanse, enrich and prepare content for catalog production, business reporting, and power its online storefront. Category Managers are better equipped to handle product ranging decisions and supplier negotiations. Branch-level service personnel have access to accurate product data to answer customer inquiries more effectively.

Through the use of Innovit MDM, all catalog content has been consolidated across Wesfarmers Industrial and Safety Division.


The benefit of this integration comes through proper data synchronization, which in turn enhances data integrity significantly. By providing a unified platform to cross-reference supplier products, Innovit MDM improves the capacity of divisional managers to analyze supplier spend.

CONTACT US

To find out how Innovit can assist you with Bringing quality to Master Data, please contact us

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