



Sales Intelligence drives sales effectiveness at Lister

Lister's use of VECTA Sales Intelligence software helps improve management information, increase sales performance and grow key accounts.

Tim Cotterill discusses Sales Intelligence



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“We are very happy with VECTA and with the results it brings. We have been using VECTA for a number of years now and the solution has grown with and ahead of our requirements to improve sales team effectiveness and performance. It is a fantastic tool that really helps us to drive performance and results.”

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The Company

James Lister & Sons was originally founded as an ironmongery and hardware shop in 1874 by James Lister and as testament to the strength of the business the company still remains a family run business today. An immediate success, the shop soon became a well-established engineers’ merchant.

The company rebranded to Lister following a family management buyout in 2010, and at the heart of its service is the full range of services and products that would be expected from one of the largest independent distributors of industrial supplies in the Midlands alongside the enviable reputation for first class customer service.

Operating from 9 branches across the West Midlands, the approachable and knowledgeable team at Lister offer their expertise on a range of over 140,000 high quality stock items from 100’s of leading national and international manufacturers. Experience over a period of 140 years has enabled Lister to develop solid links with suppliers, providing strong purchasing power which in turn enables them to offer the most competitive pricing to customers.

The Challenge

With a growing annual turnover, Lister recognised back in 2004 that it needed a system that would drive sales activity to help deliver in the profitable areas of key account management, link selling and sales profitability.

Intelligence Sells

Explaining more about Lister’s decision to choose VECTA, Tim Cotterill, Chairman and Great Great Grandson of the founder of the original company, James Lister & Sons explains:

“VECTA Sales Intelligence helps our sales people to be prepared for every call, they can easily identify our customers previous buying patterns and VECTA informs them of gaps in spend and what link-sell or up-sell opportunities each one of them should present, allowing us to maximise on the value of every single call.”

VECTA is a sales intelligence solution that analyses historical sales data in order to help a company increase their share of customer spend by highlighting sales opportunities. VECTA will identify potential issues with lost or drifting customers, gaps in spend and link sell opportunities and generate detailed information on customer buying patterns, prompting users to sell more proactively.

The decision to select VECTA was based upon the strength and flexibility of the solution and VECTA’s ability to quickly and easily address the problems the Lister management team had identified and the two companies have had a strong working relationship ever since.

Why VECTA?

Tim Cotterill continues: “Our first encounter with the VECTA Team was driven by a need for easier, better, faster information on sales progress and Customer buying patterns both for our Management Team and the Sales Team ‘on the road’. We wanted to ensure we had all the information we needed in one place to enable us to better manage relationships with our Customers and ensure appropriate levels of customer contact. We also wanted a way to record visits and actions, all of which VECTA has delivered for us. We have continued to develop our business to change with the times and VECTA has evolved with us through continuous developments including the latest technologies for Mobile use. This has helped us to take a modular approach to enhancing and developing our sales planning, gap analysis, resource planning and importantly immediately picking up on client drift and product spend gaps”.



“VECTA enables us to identify spend gaps and changes in buying habits which in turn increases our share of customer wallet.”



Business Benefits:

- Increase in share of customer wallet
- Increased visibility and management control
- More proactive and planned approach to all sales calls
- Improved efficiency and performance



Taking the Strategic Approach

Tim explains: “In choosing VECTA, we were looking for an easy way of making customer details and their ordering patterns easily available to staff. VECTA enables us to quickly identify those customers where there is potentially lost business or account drift and to direct our sales team to the customer, presenting them with the perfect opportunity to open the conversation and discuss their reasons for not buying or why they are buying less of a particular product. This helps our sales team to be amongst the most professional in the industry and also gives us the chance to alert the customer to alternative prices or pricing options or even enhanced buying support such as our Added Value system; an initiative where rather than having to buy their full stock requirement at one time, the customer is able to save money by scheduling their order or arranging a Contract Call-Off Order, still allowing them to take advantage of the best available price. That way we are not only retaining the customer but also keeping them happy through provision of additional services.”

Equipping the Sales Team

“VECTA ensures the sales team have the information they need, where and when needed, without overloading them with unnecessary information. It is really easy to use so they can prepare quickly for every customer contact and as a result they can cover more ground in a more effective way. As a result productivity has improved.

It is essential that our people can recognise precisely what each of their customers should be buying from us, allowing us to maximise the value of every sale we make and VECTA ensures that happens.”

Informed Management Decisions

From a management perspective it gives us a real handle on performance, spend changes and opportunities. Using VECTA our management team is well equipped to make informed decisions and drive our business to achieve optimum results. It has proven to be an extremely powerful and valuable tool.

Determining Sales Force Success

Tim continues: “Identifying our position regarding sales and client purchasing patterns was only one element of the business where VECTA was able to assist us. We were also able to improve on our reporting functions and measurement of sales force activity, in turn allowing us to analyse the performance and effectiveness of the sales team which is essential in today's business world. To further assist in this area we have recently adopted the latest VECTA WEB hosted solution giving us live mobile access to the information we need at any time”.

As well as honing in on a particular customer, the team can instantly see their territory results and any exceptions, issues or opportunities that need attention. Tim continues “VECTA has become an essential part of the sales and management toolkit and results in less time searching for information and more time in front of customers. We are continuously developing the ways VECTA supports our Sales Operation and we get more value from it every year.”

Most importantly, “VECTA enables us to identify spend gaps and changes in buying habits which in turn increases our share of customer wallet.”

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About Vecta Sales Solutions Ltd

Established in 1998, Vecta Sales Solutions Ltd provides world-class sales intelligence solutions that are used by thousands of people on a daily basis to dramatically improve their sales performance. Vecta operates from its headquarters in Sheffield and offices in Milton Keynes.

VECTA significantly improves sales effectiveness and boosts the sales performance and efficiencies of manufacturing, distribution and wholesale companies. Equipped with VECTA Sales Intelligence, companies gain optimum insight into their customers' buying patterns, contact history, product sales, territory results and much more.

VECTA provides instant visibility of relevant information and automatically analyses buying patterns to identify issues for attention and opportunities for future sales - it then highlights these to the sales team. Using VECTA, sales led organisations can eliminate wasted effort and ensure they focus on the opportunities and actions that benefit their company most.

VECTA quickly becomes invaluable throughout the business:

Managers have full visibility of sales and activity to aid decision making and direction to the team.

Sales people become more successful and productive with instant access to vital information about their customer buying patterns and account status - wherever they are and whenever they need it. It prompts them of where the best opportunities exist to ensure effective territory management and ensures that call preparation is efficient, relevant and fast.

The **Marketing team** can quickly pin-point the customers most suitable for specific marketing effort and which products they should be buying - results are simple to measure and monitor.

VECTA is much more than just reporting, easier than traditional BI and more informative than CRM alone. It helps businesses to increase average order size, improve customer retention and increase share of market, resulting in optimum revenue, margin and efficiencies.



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