

Inpute Technologies' Central Billing System delivers benefits to BWG

FACTS:**BWG Foods****Central Billing**

- €850m sales per annum
- Operates SPAR, MACE, Nearbuy, XL Stop & Shop stores
- 27 Value Centre
- 3 Distribution Centres
- 45,000 transactions per week
- 100's of suppliers
- Weekly billing cycle

Before: (Issues)

- Delayed invoice processing
- Increasing resources required
- Increasing support calls
- Increasing support time

After: (Benefits)

- Significant efficiency gains
- Instant cash-flow gains
- Reduced billing queries
- Better business
- More productive department

Central Billing:

- Inpute Capture Module
- Alchemy Premium Server
- Alchemy Premium Search Clients
- Alchemy Datagrabber (COLD) Module
- Inpute EDI Module
- Inpute Central Billing

About BWG

BWG Foods operates the SPAR, MACE, Nearbuy, XL Stop & Shop franchises with 27 ValueCentre wholesale outlets and 3 distribution centres throughout Ireland. BWG generates revenues in Ireland of over €850M per annum, making the company one of Ireland's largest retailers. By definition, their business is transaction intensive, with over 45,000 delivery related invoices passing through their central billing system weekly.

The Challenge

Every week, suppliers make over 1,000 deliveries to 950 stores around the country, while invoicing BWG directly. BWG's central billing unit then reconciles the 45,000 (and growing) weekly delivery invoices and issues consolidated invoices to every store. Back in 2001, BWG was processing 25,000 transactions per week, of which 7,000 were paper based with the remainder electronic. The system at the time was based on an imaging system, that didn't manage the complete process, which made the task impractical to streamline. It was becoming impossible to process the growing volume of transactions within the required weekly cycle. The looming Euro change over provided yet another reason to act and replace the entire system.

Issues at this time included:

- Delayed invoicing
- Significant effort and resources were required to maintain the system and to resolve issues, leading to frustration with staff
- IT staff were being diverted from their daily tasks to resolve the ever increasing amounts of system issues

This problem is best summarised by BWG's project manager, Ronan O'Farrell:

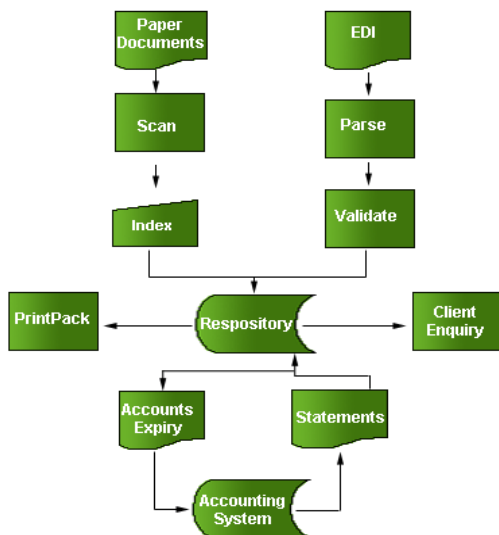
"Our system wasn't streamlined, it was too labour intensive and required a significant amount of administration and IT resources to keep the system in operations"

Alternative suppliers:

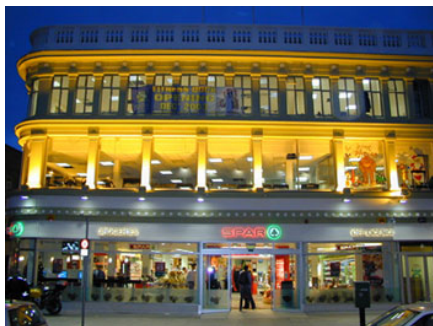
BWG decided to replace the system and vendor.

At the end of 2001, after reviewing the marketplace, BWG met with Inpute Technologies, a leading specialist IT company in document capture and workflow solutions. Over the following number of weeks, Inpute demonstrated it's capabilities in assessing and resolving specific business and technical issues. Inpute were then asked to review BWG's entire central billing requirements and to recommend changes to the current process. Inpute worked with BWG to create a Functional Specification and then at the end of 2001, produced a proposal for a replacement system.





Central Billing flow diagram



Inpute Technologies Solution

The new central billing system designed and implemented by Inpute, captures, processes and validates electronic (EDI) and paper supplier invoices. The system then automatically exports validated data to BWG's purchase ledger. Using a combination of imaging and COLD technologies, electronic images of all invoices are automatically indexed and stored in an Alchemy document management system, providing instant access for BWG customer service staff.

While integrating with the BWG sales ledger, the Inpute Central Billing system automatically generates the weekly consolidated invoice print packs for each customer store. Based on customer preferences, the print-packs are printed or issued electronically on CD or via email in PDF format.

Ronan O'Farrell describes the impact of the new system;

"On going live, there was instant and substantial benefit with the ability to trace all invoices allowing customer queries to be resolved quickly and satisfactorily."

"Inpute are highly professional and I am very happy to work with them. The system did what it said in the proposal. The system we have now is capable of expanding with our ever growing transaction volumes. No Doubt, Inpute are good at what they do."

The System Today

Today BWG's central billing system efficiently processes over 45,000 transactions per week for all SPAR, MACE, Nearbuy, XL Stop & Shop stores throughout Ireland. The system comfortably manages ongoing growth in transaction volumes, resulting from the regular addition of new customer outlets.

"The efficiency of our central billing operation has significantly improved and has allowed us to develop the system beyond our expectations when the system was put live in 2002."

Fergus O'Hehir, E Commerce Manager, BWG Foods Ltd.

The system has delivered the following benefits:

- **Significant efficiency gains**
 - All documents received are verified and automatically entered into the system resulting in less human intervention and a decrease in processing times, even as the volume of transactions is increasing.
- **Instant cash-flow gains**
 - Transactions are processed quickly and efficiently enabling the prompt production of BWG consolidated invoices and resulting payment. This brings significant cash gains in an organisation of €850M annual revenues.
- **Reduced billing queries**
 - The efficiency, reliability and dependability of the system and the validation process have resulted in a significant reduction in customer queries and the time and the number of staff required to process these.
- **Better business**
 - BWG's customers, the SPAR, MACE, Nearbuy, XL Stop & Shop stores now receive accurate and timely confirmation of their transactions in a format of their choice resulting in a significant increase in customer satisfaction.
- **More productive central billing department**
 - BWG's central billing team's job is so much easier and satisfying. The business process is clearly defined and controlled.

"We are very comfortable working with Inpute, they take responsibility to deliver. Our business relationship is based on trust. Inpute are a partner to our business." - Veronica Sullivan, Head of IT, BWG Foods Ltd

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