

# Brown Thomas gain benefits from Workflow

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**SUMMARY:**

- Brown Thomas is Ireland's most prestigious lifestyle store
- Seven stores nationwide including three BT2 stores
- Stores received 40,000 deliveries per annum

**ISSUES (Before):**

- Inefficient goods-in process
- Intensive slow paper processes
- Lose of settlement discounts
- Poor tracking of stocks

**BENEFITS (After):**

- Greater efficiencies
- Improved stock turnover
- Attainment of settlement discounts
- Instant cash-flow gains
- Reduction in delivering handling costs
- Easing pressure on centralised deliveries

**SOLUTION:**

- Captaris Alchemy
- Inpute Capture
- Metastorm eWork

**About Brown Thomas**

Brown Thomas is Ireland's most prestigious lifestyle store, housing the world's most exclusive designers from fashions and accessories to beauty and home. The Brown Thomas group (which includes BT2) prides itself with an unrivalled shopping experience across its four stores in Dublin, Cork, Limerick & Galway as well as its 3 BT2 stores (Grafton Street, Dundrum & Blanchardstown).

**The Challenge**

To devise a system which would allow:

- Seven stores in different geographical regions the ability to view thousands of products with correct product pricing (and the ability to change) at any given time.
- Paperwork, such as delivery dockets and invoices, to be matched with the information contained within their merchandising system.

**Historically**

Each store received goods directly from suppliers and each with its own method of recording and tracking deliveries.

Due to the huge amounts of stock received into each individual store - anomalies would occasionally occur. For example, some items may not have been recorded onto the merchandising system or misplacement or inaccuracy of paperwork.

**The Way Forward**

The company decided it needed to have a centralised point of distribution.

"There are three broad steps, the physical goods moving, the paperwork and the merchandising system," said Bernard Sheehy, director of business development at Brown Thomas. "Our old system had lacked the inherent integrity to ensure that everything would all move in unison, therefore this involved excessive administrative resources in ensuring stock and system accuracy. If everyone updated the system and paperwork that was fine, but how could we ensure that if something such as a stock transfer happened that physically the paperwork and the systems were updated simultaneously?"

**The Project**

Bernard Sheehy decided to approach Inpute to seek a solution to the problem in 2001.

At that point, the Brown Thomas group was looking for a merchandising system that had visibility when goods were booked and received. The company changed its method of operating totally from receiving goods directly from the vendor to each store to being dispatched from a centralised distribution point.



Following a review of BT's process flow, Inpute implemented a workflow solution based on eWork that provided the Brown Thomas Group with the transparency the company required

The **thin client application** enables exceptions to be raised on a delivery and completely manages return of damaged goods.

The **flexible implementation approach** adapted by Inpute Technologies and Brown Thomas ensures that the lists of requirements are easily accommodated. By modelling the goods inward process, the system facilitates the capture and reconciliation of delivery documents with the Group's management systems.

The system itself was introduced in early April 2002 and was rolled out to all Brown Thomas & BT2 stores. The company now receives up to 40,000 deliveries per annum, to be redistributed across the seven stores. With up to 45 internal users working across the system now, clear efficiencies have been gained.

### **Key User Benefits**

Both the buying & retail functions of the business now have visibility on what's been booked in, when it's been received, how long it's been there, how many cartons received as well as unit number and value.

### **Overall Benefits**

"The system has been great," said Sheehy. "It has allowed us to go from receiving into individual stores, to getting everything from a centralised point, cutting out unnecessary administration". "In the past stock would arrive at Goods Inwards, placed on a spread sheet and e-mailed to certain people but not everyone could access it or not know where to access it".

"We looked for greater efficiencies in our good inwards department. We got it with Inpute's implementation".

"It has the whole audit trail and you can see from beginning to end how long it took to process. So it's given transparency where there was none and hence confidence and allowed us to go to centralisation. Furthermore, it's reduced paper stock loss and with that people efficiencies".

With in excess of 500 deliveries per week the Brown Thomas Group said it got return on investment in the project within a year and is extremely happy with Inpute not only as a solutions provider but also in its philosophy as a company. "I would recommend Inpute, I have worked with them for a long time and they have a very good understanding of our business needs".

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