



Dataflow Case Study Distribution



Dataflow Financials Drives Ambitious Expansion Plans For Architectural Ceramics

Ceramic tile distributor Architectural Ceramics has serious plans for business growth in the next 3 years – and is confident tough targets will be achieved with *dataflow* playing a key role in supporting the business.

Architectural Ceramics (UK) Limited is a leading specialist, contractual supplier of ceramic tiles and associated products to Architectural/Design Practices and Corporate Clients for industrial, commercial, leisure and public sector applications. Established in 1988, the company operates from a 40,000 sq ft distribution warehouse in Birmingham and employs 35 staff.

Having implemented *dataflow* in 2002, the company had been using the system successfully to manage accounting, sales order processing and stock control for four years when Operations Director Tim Venner was appointed in January 2006.

Targets for growth are a challenge easily handled by Dataflow Financials

As part of his responsibilities, Tim was tasked with looking at the company's existing systems and processes and to provide recommendations as to how these could be overhauled, not only to increase efficiencies but also to provide a firm platform for expansion going forward. Faced with significant plans to expand the company's reach in the next few years, it would be vital that the software systems in place were up to the task of handling the projected increase in workload.

The company expects to have a turnover in 2006 of £6.8m, but this is forecast to increase to £20m achieved alongside a doubling of the workforce in the next three years.

"We have a very ambitious growth strategy, and unless we have a robust business software system we won't be able to meet our targets, so we need a system that will stand up to our needs and demands," comments Tim. *dataflow's* scalability makes it invaluable to a company such as Architectural Ceramics, which is expected to grow by 15% this year alone, as it can handle any size or structure of organisation and fully supports organisational growth.



Dataflow's capabilities offer many possibilities for increasing efficiencies

With a background in IT consultancy, Tim Venner came to the company "firmly committed to an operating system running a business, as opposed to staff running the system, as it allows for less human error." Analysing the way *dataflow* was being used within the company, Tim quickly realised that Architectural Ceramics weren't making additional use of its capabilities – there were many opportunities to make more use of the software.

"Four years ago when the system was implemented, it wasn't being run to its full capacity – in fact we were probably only using *dataflow* to 5 or 10 percent of its capability." Tim immediately saw the potential benefits to the company in making the most of *dataflow* to support the business: "The system is quite capable of processing customers' orders, ledgers and stock control and I want to be using the true flexibility and power that *dataflow* has to offer."

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One key change has already been made so far this year to the way that the company uses *dataflow* – and this is already paying off impressively. An upgrade to the latest version of *dataflow* now allows the company to export invoices directly to the third party factoring company used to handle customer accounts. According to Tim, “this has had a significant impact on the speed in which we turn invoices around”. *dataflow* also integrates seamlessly with Maximizer, the CRM software used by Architectural Ceramics.

Dataflow develops Quotation system to increase the scope of Dataflow Financials as a complete business system

Architectural Ceramics are already using *dataflow* to generate reports on orders generated and orders processed, by salesman, area, architect and contractor. However Tim feels that the company can make more effective use of the systems’ powerful reporting capabilities, and so the company is investing further in *dataflow* by implementing a bespoke system designed by Dataflow to replace their existing quotation software.

Quotations will now be generated by the new Job File Manager directly into *dataflow*, flowing through Sales Order Processing into the Sales Ledger. Contractor details will be picked up directly from the Sales account records and invoices will automatically flow through from the Sales Orders via Quotations. The new system will also have a very powerful reporting structure to it, for example, sales analysis will be available by Stock item and Product Group. “This will allow us to capture vital information in order for the business to move forward”, notes Tim.

Building relationships for future success

Architectural Ceramics plans to expand the current number of users of *dataflow*, of which there are currently 20 based in the accounts and sales departments, so that

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the system is accessible by all 36 employees and all will be able to make use of its extended capabilities. “The way I see *dataflow* impacting on the business is that it

will be a fully integrated part of Architectural Ceramics moving forward”, observes Tim.

On a personal level, Tim and the staff at Architectural Ceramics feel that they are building a solid working relationship with Dataflow to help move things forward for the future. Tim particularly feels that theirs is a two-way relationship, where the company’s needs and requests are both listened to and taken on board. “I have great faith in Dataflow and the people who work there and I feel as if we’re a voice that’s heard”, says Tim.

Building relationships between client and provider is of key importance to Dataflow, as solutions are about the people designing, implementing and using the software as much as the software itself. Tim continues, “their quick response times and ability to meet the requirements of a business like ours leads us to want to work in partnership with a key suppliers such as Dataflow.” Tim Venner concludes: “Architectural Ceramics are looking to Dataflow to be able to drive this business forward in the 21st century.”

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Darius Mogtader, Dataflow’s Managing Director, comments, “We are delighted that Architectural Ceramics have taken full advantage of the power and flexibility of *dataflow* and we look forward to working with the company and help them expand their business”.

Dataflow’s Management Systems are already helping many companies to realise their true growth potential through streamlining their business processes. If you would like further information, please contact us on 0845 456 1020.

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