



Dataflow Case Study Importers



isola

dataflow~32 provides firm financial base for Isola

When Europe's leading manufacturer of base materials for PCBs looked to upgrade to a Windows® accounting system, it chose dataflow~32

Founded almost a century ago, Isola is a pioneer in the field of laminate technology. Based in Cumbernauld, Scotland and with offices in Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland and the USA, the company is an international operating force, serving a global customer base. It is one of the foremost base material producers in the world, and the leader in Europe.

In particular, Isola produces materials for the production of leading-edge printed circuit boards (PCBs) that are central to modern communication products, such as radios and mobile phones. Other Isola products include industrial laminated plastics, moulded articles made of thermosetting materials such as lamp housings and office machine frames, as well as high-performance composite materials.

The Isola factory in Cumbernauld, which employs 415 staff and has a 10,000 square metre production area, has been operational since April 1987 and is key to the company's success in the UK.

Isola's commitment to quality - essential in an operating environment where a speck of dust can render an entire PCB useless - extends throughout the company into all areas of the business. In an increasingly sophisticated and competitive market, Isola has stayed ahead of the field through its constant drive towards more streamlined and efficient manufacturing processes, investment in research and development, and strategic alliances with specialised suppliers.

Technology plays a key role in its success and Isola recently won the 'Best e-Commerce Business-to-Business Website' award for its Extranet at the prestigious *Winners at the Web* awards. It is estimated that the Scottish factory has seen a near 20% rise in its share of the printed circuit board base materials market in the UK and Ireland. Much of this is attributed to the fast access to information, flexibility and improved service delivered through the Extranet.



Good business and financial control underpin Isola's growth and success and a flexible accounting system has always been a priority. Originally a Sage customer, Isola then used Dataflow's DOS-based software, dBFLEX, successfully for six years before seeking a Windows® based replacement.

Recognising the need to harness the power of new technologies and to facilitate the move towards eCommerce, Isola sought a more modern system to handle its current business needs and to support further business growth and future IT developments. The goal was to support its investment in eCommerce with an up-to-date accounting system for business operations.

Although pleased with dBFLEX and the support provided by Dataflow, Colin Smithson, the Financial Controller at Isola, decided to consider a number of different companies and their Windows offerings before making his choice. His investigation of all the main players took in Sage and Pegasus, the traditional market leaders and often the first names on the list in any review of accountancy software.

"After investigating the market at some length, we found that *dataflow~32* was the one that best met all our requirements. It stood out from the rest in terms of its functionality and flexibility for present and future needs," explains Colin Smithson. "There were a number for features that differentiated it from the competition.

"...dataflow~32 was the one that best met all our requirements. It stood out from the rest in terms of its functionality ..."



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For example, we were particularly impressed with the ease with which data could be manipulated and integrated with our bespoke production package that generates all our sales invoices. Being a true 32-bit Windows product, it is also very easy to use."

Many of the products checked out by Isola were old technologies with a Windows 'look and feel' bolted on. While superficially these products appear to be true Windows packages, they lack the power and flexibility of a genuine end-to-end Windows solution.

"...we knew that Dataflow would be highly responsive to our needs."

As with any IT system, support is a major consideration for Isola. "Strong back up is as important as the product itself," emphasises Colin Smithson, "and because we had dealt with

Dataflow in the past we knew that they would be highly responsive to our needs."

The installation of the *dataflow~32* software took place in January this year as a 10-user system. The change over was painless and automatic. The Isola accounts department is now running the following *dataflow~32* modules: Sales Processing, Nominal Ledger, Purchase Order Processing and Stock Control modules. All seamlessly integrate with its in-house manufacturing management system.

Colin Smithson's confidence in the ability of Dataflow to provide the necessary support has proved well founded. In one month, Isola had 7,500 sales invoices and 1,000 purchase orders and the system began to run more slowly than it should. "Dataflow reacted very quickly and the problem was solved," says Colin Smithson. "It turned out to be a minor data-indexing problem and the software now deals quickly with that sort of volume."

Isola has been particularly impressed with *dataflow~32*'s simple drag and drop transference to and from Excel spreadsheets, a function of the system that is used a great deal and is an excellent time-saver.

Another benefit is that at period end, closing down through *dataflow~32* can be done in seconds. "With some of the other systems that we looked at it would have taken up to a day to do this," comments Colin Smithson. "With *dataflow~32*, you just point and click and it's done."

Now that *dataflow~32* is well established at Isola in Scotland, it is also being installed as a five-user system at a subsidiary in the Philippines. In addition, the company intends to further exploit the functionality of the system and is planning to integrate it directly with its Extranet and e-Commerce system.

Dariusz Mogtader, Managing Director of Dataflow UK, comments, "We are delighted that through *dataflow~32*, we are continuing to provide Isola with a powerful, yet user-friendly system."

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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