



'We can pick the optimum combination to meet an order most efficiently'

Soft furnishings trendsetter Ashley Wilde works with some of the biggest celebrity names and household brands, including Kylie Minogue and Ted Baker.

But when it came to replacing its business software, there was only one name that counted. In 2014, the Hertfordshire-based firm engaged textiles software specialists, Reflex Data – and it has never looked back.

Finance director, Rob Goldwater said that the company's specialist Mertex software brought improved customer satisfaction, increased efficiency, less wastage and made data easier to access.

"It made an immediate impact by improving the efficiency and reliability of stock management," he said.

Rob explained: "A lot of what we do involves cutting fabrics from rolls for curtain making and upholstery. Our warehouse is full of rolls. The problem arises when you cut a length for

one order and then need to know if you've got enough left to fulfil the next order.

"Mertex makes it visible so we know exactly what length we've got left on what roll. We can pick the optimum combination to meet an order most efficiently. Its reliability is a great contrast to the old system."

Rob said that Mertex's barcode labelling has made stock taking, picking and delivery more accurate and has projected a more professional image to customers while at the same time improving speed and reliability of despatch through its ability to integrate product data at every stage.

"In the finance module, I love the fact I can see an invoice image instantly. It saves staff having to file purchase ledger invoices and then trawl through lever arch files to retrieve them."

Working life has been transformed in the sales department, says Rob.

"Order entry has improved – it's quick and seamless," said Rob. "Mertex also allows multiple orders to be duplicated, which is particularly good when launching a new range of products."

With many large retailers using electronic data interchange (EDI), companies like Ashley Wilde must be able to receive, process and output data in the correct format. Mertex enables this. Meanwhile, customer service staff can call on a much greater depth of information and have the answers to most customer enquiries at their fingertips, from order confirmation to estimated delivery date.

Mertex, says Rob, is particularly suited to the needs of the soft furnishings industry because of Reflex Data's long-term commitment to getting the product just right for its customers.

"We quickly realised they were a force to be reckoned with," he said. "They have a unique portfolio of customers and there's a very good fit between their product and our business. →

ASHLEY WILDE GROUP CASE STUDY

→ Having said that, they've carried out various projects for us – modifying screens, integrating systems – that has improved the fit even further."

After a year of using the core Mertex package, Ashley Wilde decided to add the e-commerce module Webtex in 2015. The decision is already paying dividends.

"Webtex is now taking about five per cent of our orders," said Rob. "It's relieving the resources

we need in the customer service department and improving accuracy. Also 24/7 visibility is a great feature to be able to offer customers in different time zones."

He added: "One of the things that enticed us in the first place was the value for money that Mertex offered. Although there was a significant capital outlay, we knew it would reduce costs in the long term because the system is so stable and doesn't need a lot of maintenance.

"At first, we were a bit in awe of the amount of work required to switch to Mertex but we needn't have worried. Reflex Data appointed an experienced project manager and their expert staff were also available to deliver training and support as and when required. It was very efficient for our people and minimised costs.

"The implementation went very smoothly and we went live on the planned date."



About Reflex

Reflex Data is an established supplier of ERP software and services to the textile and fabrics industry, with a track record of ensuring customers get the best return from their investment. Established in 1987, the company is the developer of the market leading software Mertex which looks after all customers' needs including: the manufacture or purchase of greige cloth; barcoded inventory management; warehouse picking and control, financial accounting and sales order processing. Mertex also has the latest in business analytics and iPad technology. Reflex Data has huge industry knowledge and a worldwide customer base.

About Ashley Wilde

The Ashley Wilde Group has become one of the market leaders in soft furnishings both in the UK and internationally. Established in 1950, this third generation family business has a strong heritage within the textiles industry, with a product portfolio that now includes fabrics, curtains, blinds, cushions and bed linen.