



K8 continues to evolve at TBS

For the last 10 years Nick Porter has been involved with looking after IT at TBS, a two branch merchant business in Northamptonshire. Nick and his seven strong team are also responsible for managing all the IT systems across the House of Goodness group – the company that owns TBS and operates a variety of other businesses including health food wholesaling, farming, timber importing and worktop manufacturing.



Background

- General builders' merchant operation, biased towards the trade but with kitchen and bathroom showrooms
- 200 staff employed (across House of Goodness group), 60 K8 users
- Strong reputation with local customers for good customer service

The House of Goodness group has used a KCS solution to manage its finance since the mid 90s when the group first progressed from a paper system. When it was time for TBS to upgrade from its legacy trading system, it made sense to consider the full K8 solution alongside the other contenders.

"Our legacy system had been in place at TBS for a very long time," explained Nick, "and the software simply wasn't keeping up with the needs of the industry. The biggest issue was trying to integrate it with our website. We wanted to trade more effectively online and, although we had developed various 'workarounds', orders still had to be re-keyed and any information was only up to date as of the night before."

Nick and his team shortlisted three providers including KCS and asked the branch managers and other key staff to score the functionality of each system. "They were all capable systems," he said, "but K8 scored consistently better across the board - as a whole package it just delivered!"

At the time TBS was running three branches and K8 went live across all three on the same morning. Nick remembered, "Go live was pretty smooth. The KCS consultants who came in to help oversee it were excellent. We had a couple of minor issues that were quickly resolved and it helped that we were already familiar with the system through using an earlier finance part."

Many of the improvements first seen at TBS were down to the sales team having much faster access to information. The old system had been character based and K8's modern interface made it much easier to search for products. Moving to K8's new integrated general ledger was a change of mindset after using a traditional sales, purchase and nominal system but, according to Nick, having a 'joined up' trading and finance system has been really helpful especially as users can just drill down to see what's behind a figure that doesn't look right. He said that being able to take direct debits straight off the trading system is also 'a massive time saver' compared to setting these up manually on the online banking system.

According to Nick stock control has also been improved through the development of 'work places' within K8 that allow you to enter a product code and then see all the information you need about that product in one place. "If anything goes wrong we can identify what's happened quickly and easily rather than having to look at report after report and to search for delivery notes," he said.

The TBS management team is able to use K8's data warehouse drills for sales analysis and also use it to make decisions on stockholding and purchase commitments.

Case Study

TBS Building Supplies



// We'll soon upgrade to Web Builder's new responsive version as we know that many of our customers are accessing our site on their smartphones. This upgrade will also allow us to offer online account payment.

Nick Porter, IT Manager, [TBS Building Supplies](#)



K8's standard functionality can also be adapted to suit the needs of individual businesses. Nick said, "It's nice that the system is flexible enough, for example, to adapt the suggested purchase ordering calculation, so we can better handle purchasing of new products where there is no history."

In 2015 TBS started to use Web Builder, K8's fully integrated on-line trading platform. "Once we had re-categorised our products and taken care of the design work, it was easy to import the product information and images from our old site," said Nick. TBS have around 11,000 trade account holders and now any of these can log on using their user name and password to place orders for delivery or collection, enquire on order status and copy any documents they need. "We have many small builder customers who do their admin in the evening so this is a really great benefit to them," said Nick. "We'll soon upgrade to Web Builder's new responsive version as we know that many of our customers are accessing our site on their smartphones. This upgrade will also allow us to offer online account payment."



Another imminent IT project is the migration of TBS's K8 software to the K-Cloud. Nick explained, "This has come about partly because we are moving out of the building where our servers are currently sitting, but as they are also nearly seven years old we felt it was a good time to investigate our options. Making them 'somebody else's problem' seemed like a great idea! I'd heard really good reviews about K-Cloud, and how it offers better levels of security than we could ever provide for our own servers. I think it makes sense to use it."

Nick believes the relationship between TBS and KCS has been pretty good since it started and concludes that one of the main things he likes about K8 is 'the joined up nature of things'. He explained, "When you look at something in a sales order for example, you can go on and see it in the general ledger - or in the supply chain. It's the connectedness of the information. We can scan in delivery notes and purchase invoices that come in on paper - so there's always just one place for all your information. There's no going in and out of screens or off to search through filing cabinets!"

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Contact Kerridge Commercial Systems

UK +44 (0) 1488 662 000

Ireland +353 (0)1 469 3375

K8info@kerridgecs.com

www.kerridgecs.com