

PRESS INFORMATION

Specialist Clothing Manufacturer David Luke Gains Big Business Benefits with Logistics Consultancy

"You don't have to be big to get the best expertise," comments Kathryn Burgess of children's uniform manufacturer David Luke, maker of school, scout and guide uniforms. "Our industry is fairly small and we deal mainly with independent retailers," adds Burgess, supply chain manager. "Yet we are coming under price pressure and we knew we had to improve our efficiency."

One of the main areas identified for progress was the warehouse and despatch operation. "We had some ideas already, but did not know how to go about making the improvements," confesses Burgess. "We contacted The Logistics Business and were initially interested in their health check service, but it was quickly realised that we needed a little more than that - although we had a limited budget."

"As a company we have not focused on logistics much. We wanted to tap into the best expertise. Graham Mawdsley of The Logistics Business was able to provide that external perspective, even on areas we had already identified."

Areas for improvement were identified and potential improvements specified. With a few days support spread over a number of weeks, Mawdsley also prepared thorough implementation plans to actually realise the benefits sought.

"We were always good at identifying things that could be done but he helped in the project planning and carrying them out. He even gave us a project template to make sure we were doing the right things."

One of the areas Mawdsley picked up on was stock control and location. As a result David Luke have now ordered a stock location module to their business software, Aria. "We were increasing in size and knew we were losing stock, and losing time looking for it. We have had to have a specific module written for our integrated system. Luckily, Graham was there to make sure all the pertinent questions were asked and we got all the right answers," adds Burgess.

Improvements have also been made to the picking and packing operations, plus staff reporting and lines of responsibility, eliminating earlier confusion. Burgess; "the warehouse has traditionally been the poor relation in our industry. Giving it priority helped to improve morale."

Measuring and reporting in general has been considerably improved, for example David Luke can now assess supplier delivery performance and identify companies which need to improve, benefiting David Luke's own smooth operations.

"The Logistics Business also developed forecasting for the warehouse. We found that we were going to run out of space this May, but because we had anticipated the peaks we could plan for it and find external storage for surplus stock before it became a problem."

Improved measurement is helping the company in other ways. "We can now see where we are and the areas to be improved. Our last annual stock take was also so much smoother," adds Burgess, who has to cater for many different school uniforms leading to, for example, around 30,000 school blazers in stock. "We did not lose half as much in missing stock and we finished sooner."

Although some of the improvements are still to be completed, the business is already seeing significant benefits. "We have increased our performance. For example, we have reduced errors. That's not the only customer service benefit; we are getting orders out more quickly and

have managed to cut our maximum order backlog by over two thirds," claims Burgess.

"The service was absolutely affordable, even for a relatively small company such as ours," states Kathryn Burgess. "For just five days support, it really makes a difference. You don't have to be ICI to get top level service."

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Photo Caption

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