



POWERING SALES

Applico Opens Kitchen Showrooms 24/7

Traditionally, the kitchen is the room in the house most associated with the family so it's no surprise that Applico, New Zealand's leading importer of premium kitchen appliances, is a family business.

Applico sells brands including Smeg, Baumatic and Classique from Italy and Viking from the USA. Established in 1986, Applico today supplies appliances to one in three homes in New Zealand, from small apartment fitouts to full commercial sized kitchens.

The brands are sold nationally through the retailers Betta Electrical, Kitchen Things and Carters. Supplying over 300 finished products and 10,000 spare parts, Applico needs to present detailed information to retailers, architects, service agents and customers.

Applico decided to further automate its service provision across several channels by implementing Neotek Enterprise, a suite of powerful solutions which enable customers and business partners to browse and buy from wherever they are. Designed for importers and distributors, Neotek Enterprise includes eCommerce and public website modules, print and CD catalogues, as well as Sales Force Automation.

“As our business has grown, so have the service and information requirements of our partners. Neotek Enterprise provided us the tools to improve our customer service and create a significant competitive advantage.”

Rachel Louie

General Manager, Applico

Benefits

- ◆ Easily present detailed information to retailers, architects, service agents and customers.
- ◆ Increase the number of visits that service agents make each day.
- ◆ Reduce the time customers wait for an appliance to be repaired.



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“We started out simply intending to rebuild our website but soon realised we needed more direct and much easier control over the content,” says Louie. “Neotek’s team applied their industry expertise, showing us how to solve this problem and achieve a lot more besides.”

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Applico now makes detailed information about product, pricing, inventory and promotions available online in real time to all business partners. A large percentage of kitchen shopping is done on weekends and it's a huge advantage for retailers to be able to access product information, place orders and check on existing ones when customers are in-store.

Extending product information to the public

Thanks to Neotek, Applico's public facing website is always up to date with the latest product catalogue information, drawn from its business-to-business eCommerce system. This enables retail customers to easily browse appliances, find the nearest sales and service agents or register warranties after purchase.



Increasing Productivity of Field Service Agents

Authorised service agents are critical to Applico's business because every appliance sold is covered under warranty. Each appliance comes with manuals, exploded view diagrams and a range of information about parts and service, all of which are costly to distribute, update and manage. “Previously, to find and order the correct parts for one of our products required a service agent to make a series of phone calls and faxes. Now each agent can view and order from the full range of parts online,” explains Louie.

For service agents who spend more time in the field, Applico publishes fully detailed catalogues onto CD. The agents can work and create orders offline, which are uploaded upon their return to their office. With easy access to inventory and shipping information, they can plan their days better, knowing when parts will be available for use in the field.

Ian Hassell, Neotek's Director of Sales and Marketing, describes this as an important productivity gain for Applico. “Generating greater efficiencies for service

agents means more calls can be done each day, reducing the time customers have to wait for an appliance to be repaired.”

Market Flexibility

Applico prides itself on being quick and agile to meet market demand. A recent product launch cycle that took just four months from idea to launch is evidence of this commitment.

“Our Enterprise Suite is a great fit for specialist distributors like Applico,” believes Hassell. “We have been able to improve service levels and reduce administration costs, critical factors to retaining their position at the top of a very competitive market.”

For Louie, the experience of working with Neotek has been rewarding. “Neotek are very professional and were able to be flexible when we needed it. They truly understand the business and their experience in integration means they can make suggestions that have improved our processes. They exceeded our expectations to ensure we were happy.”

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