



Case Study



In Brief

Company: Millet Sports

Challenge: A single platform to drive supply chain and sales across multiple channels – web, mail order and retail.

Solution: 3EX.NET by Exact Abacus

Benefits:

- Strong multi-channel focus and advanced functionality
- Leading edge and future-proof platform
- Intuitive user interface and reporting
- Innovative software licensing

Country: UK

Millet Sports Get Connected with 3EX.NET

Sports retailer Millet Sports wanted a leading edge solution to drive cost-effective growth across all channels. The company selected 3EX.NET software by Exact Abacus.

London-based Millet Sports is a retailer that knows its market and is able to compete with the large sports chains by providing a personal and expert service. Furthermore, it has always been early to identify new channels to market and has aggressively pursued a distinct 'Customer Choice' strategy. As a result, the business grew rapidly through the 90's and 00's, handled by a series of bespoke and loosely integrated packaged software applications. As the IT environment became increasingly unwieldy, a decision was made to migrate to a new, fully integrated system.

By summer 2007 the business requirements had been specified and the selection process initiated. Millet Sports CEO, Mike Thornhill comments: "Our decision process was driven by commercial imperatives and after evaluating the licensing models available, we chose Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) as our preferred option. Our business is good at sports equipment retailing and we wanted to keep our IT overheads low, whilst maximising the opportunities that technology could offer."

In December 2007, Millet Sports placed a contract with Exact Abacus for the provision of their hosted 3EX.NET solution. Developed specifically for the multi-channel retail market and based on Windows Server 2003, SQL Server 2005 and .NET 3.0 web services, 3EX.NET controls all back office operations including supply chain, warehouse, customer management, shop sales and web marketing. Mike Thornhill continues: "After an extensive evaluation of the marketplace, 3EX.NET was the clear winner on the basis of its leading edge technology, clever functionality, ease of use and the vast experience of its authors in our marketplace. Quite simply, the system delivers more functionality much more flexibly than anything else we looked at. It is not an understatement to say that 3EX.NET software will revolutionise our business."

Indeed, 3EX.NET connects business processes that were previously managed in a variety of applications, that duplicated effort and hindered growth. The best practice method developed by Exact Abacus and imposed by 3EX.NET enables Millet Sports to accelerate return on their investment by reducing operational costs and enhancing customer service.

It works by enabling a continuous and reciprocating flow of information between marketers, purchasers, customer service representatives and stock controllers. The process starts with campaign planning, where all demand-yielding marketing activity is planned in advance, generating stock requirement forecasts based on 'response profiles'. Purchasers then use 3EX.NET inventory planning to simulate future sales and intelligently buy stock and resource within the least cost framework. Once stock is received, the stock control module ensures that it is optimally located, with all tasks managed on the wireless 'Pocket 3EX.NET' application, which is designed to generate substantial time/motion cost savings within warehouse environments. Customer service operators benefit from an intuitive interface, where data entry tasks are 'wizard based' and all customer-centric activities are logged within a single environment for ongoing relationship management.

The application will integrate with Millet Sports' next generation webstore via web services, ensuring seamless integration of data and business logic between back office and customer. "The opportunities provided by a single platform for all channels are boundless. We aspire to double the size of the business within 2 years without adding significant operational costs, by automating processes and working smarter with 3EX.NET," notes Thornhill.