

CASE STUDY



CLIENT:	Abyss
INDUSTRY:	Wholesaling
LOCATION:	Australia
PRODUCT SUITE:	EXO Business
MYOB ENTERPRISE PARTNER:	Exoserv

Abyss finds a solution that not only increases the speed and accuracy of invoicing and sales reports, but provides a platform for future growth.

Overview

Abyss Distribution is an Australian importer and wholesaler of skateboard gear like Protec Helmets, Coal Fashion and Fila In-Line skates.

Currently in a period of intense growth, Abyss is looking to reduce reporting errors, invoice faster and, ultimately, shift more stock out the door.

The story before...

Abyss had been running MYOB Premier for a number of years. However, as business grew, so did the size of Premier's data file. And without the capacity for

a style, colour or size matrix, invoicing became slow and unwieldy.

Size wasn't the only issue. Abyss needed to run other programs alongside Premier, such as Sales Matrix, EDI and Scan Packaging. And Premier wasn't capable of integrating with additional third party software at that level.

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Choosing a successor

Abyss' MD Paul Horsey looked at a number of potential successors to Premier, including SAP.

He admits that in addition to stock purchasing, currency and invoicing, much of his focus was on finding an integrated size colour matrix module.

"There's always a huge amount of duplicate data entry involved when you sell so many similar products by size and colour. The only way to seriously improve our invoicing speed, as we saw it, was to use a size matrix module. The problem was finding one that was fully incorporated within a sales order and accounting software package."

In the end, Horsey settled on MYOB's EXO (formally MYOB Exonet), but not until he'd spent the best part of 14 months researching the market.

Of the factors influencing Abyss' decision, Horsey says one of the main reasons he opted for EXO was that it was owned by a trusted brand like MYOB.

The size colour matrix also played a big part. Because unlike competing software packages that use a size colour matrix from a third party like Noble Matrix, EXO has the functionality built in.

"But the bottom line," says Horsey, "is the system met our budget".

The other half of the solution...

Despite Horsey's systematic approach to choosing a new system for his business, he admits that, in many respects, the right software is only one half of the solution.

The other, he says, is the company you partner up with to implement and support it.

Horsey decided to work with Exoserv because of their history in accounting and business solution software and their reputation for being one of the best in the business.

"From the outset, they really understood our business and grasped the issues," says Horsey. "Better still, they appreciated what we wanted to get out of the system further down the line – not just in the immediate months following our switch to EXO."

Horsey says that Abyss' system requirements would have presented a real challenge for any systems implementer. But Exoserv consistently delivered "over and above".

"They not only complied with our requests for new invoice forms," he says, "but were proactive in suggesting alternatives to the design of our system that we either hadn't thought of, or just couldn't envisage".

The switch

At 3pm on a Friday, Abyss shut down its old system. EXO was up and running by 9pm the same day.

When pressed on the issue of usability, Horsey prefers not to draw comparisons between old and new. If people have got used to using one system over a number of years, he reasons, it's unrealistic to expect them to be instantly comfortable using something else.

"We accepted from the outset that with a new system in place, we'd be doing things differently."

With training too, Abyss took a fresh approach. Instead of putting everybody through generic training for the entire system, Horsey split users into logical groups and trained them to use only the aspects of EXO directly relevant to their role.

The customer service team was trained in creating sales orders, invoicing and paying off debtors, while the head of finance was trained in all aspects crucial to managing the ledger. Horsey himself focused on learning how to create product codes and inward purchases of stock.

"Splitting our training three ways meant we could comfortably be operational with EXO in three to four days," says Horsey, "as opposed to weeks".

"That's not to say that there weren't any bumps in the road, but as long as we could create invoices and keep our stock moving out the door, we weren't too concerned. Exoserv were always quick to respond and any background issues were normally resolved within 48 hours."

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The size and colour of improvement

Some 12 months down the line, Horsey is in no doubt about the benefits of EXO. And the most glaring improvement, he says, is the reduction in invoicing time and errors.

“We’re in a period of strong growth at the moment and there have been peak months when we simply couldn’t have raised the number of invoices we did, or shifted as much stock out the door, had we not been using EXO.”

A large part of that increase in capacity is down to the size colour matrix, which saves Abyss tens of man hours in data entry a week. But according to Horsey, it’s also down to the increased visibility EXO gives them.

“Pop ups alert our customer service team as soon as there’s a possible issue with a debtor, which means we can now make decisions about credit based on actual information.”

“It’s the same deal when we’re trying to identify the sales performance of individual products. Because EXO allows us to report by product, segment, sub segment or even gender, we’ve got accurate three dimensional knowledge of all our stock and we can take the necessary action to improve stock turn or margin as required,” says Horsey.

A platform for growth

While Horsey is impressed with EXO’s standalone functionality, he believes EXO’s biggest selling point is its capacity to integrate with other software.

“We’ve been using Sales Matrix for around five months now,” he says, “and we’ll soon incorporate EDI and Scan Packing. We are also investigating a web based product that allows our customers to place orders directly from our website.”

The ability to link additional software to the system means Abyss can augment product and sales reporting and continue to expand as a business.

“Which means that as well as being a sound investment, EXO’s given us a platform to grow our business tenfold,” sums up Horsey.

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