

Geotechnical Instruments



Geotechnical Instruments (UK) Ltd. is a major supplier of landfill gas analysis instruments globally. Trading since the '70s, in 1990, Geotechnical Instruments launched the world's first portable infrared landfill gas analyser. Since then Geotechnical Instruments has maintained its prominent position in the landfill industry and expanded its established range to include ATEX certified landfill pumps and level monitoring instrumentation.

The Challenge

Sales and Marketing Director Steve Billingham contacted Solweb early in 2007 to discuss the needs of Geotechnical Instruments. "We needed to find a solution which not only integrated with Access Dimensions but was also capable of integrating with our MRP system 123mrp.NET. Fortunately for us Solweb were familiar with both of these applications and came highly recommended."

"Another key factor in the development of the site was the look. We anticipated having to employ a separate agency to deal with the graphics, however we were very pleased to learn that Solweb's services extended beyond the development to professional design as well," he adds.

At a pre-arranged meeting we were able to identify the projects key objectives:

1. Provide customers with an online e-commerce catalogue of products.

2. Integrate online sales to both new and existing customers.

3. Offer existing customers the ability to buy online utilising their specific price structures.

4. Accommodate the customer's requirements for an online account management system

5. Provide customers with a facility to download specification sheets & operating manuals.

6. Promote individual products through banner advertising.

7. Publish news articles and press releases to the site.

8. Furnish customers with an array of navigation and search options.

Although the standard WebPortal product fulfilled many of these needs, some bespoke development was required.

The Solution

Business-to-Business (B2B) e-commerce is a subject that very few companies take the time to address properly. Although there is confusion between the B2B and B2C integration paradigms, there are differences that go much deeper than the differences between retail and wholesale purchasing. B2B integration is fundamentally about co-ordinating information among businesses and their information systems.

Your traditional e-tailer sells to a general public where repeat custom is few and far between, and all sales are placed through the website. Business to business models need to co-ordinate online and offline sales, interact with accountancy packages, and feed other internal software applications such as manufacturing systems.

B2B integration enables a company to focus on its core competencies by automating the day to day tasks which take up much of their employee's time.

Steve Billingham comments, "We wanted a site which would allow us to trade with our existing account holding customers, as well as generate sales from new customers. Simple we thought. However on meeting with Solweb we realised that we had overlooked a number of fundamental issues. Registrations from existing customer would need to be tied to their accounts in Access Dimensions and 123mrp.NET so that orders can be placed based on the financial status of their account. Where as new customers would be placing their first orders on credit card and would need accounts creating in both of the applications. Fortunately WebPortal offered us a number of options to deal with this problem seamlessly integrating with Access Dimensions and 123mrp.NET"

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Steven Billingham, Sales & Marketing Director. Geotechnical Instrument Ltd.

Taking advantage of WebPortal's spectacular 'Product Spec Builder', Geotechnical instruments were able to create comprehensive spec sheets with downloadable documentation. Combine this with it's capability to link the products to 123mrp.NET's pricing system and pull account history from Access Dimensions, and you are well on your way to creating a true B2B website. "Providing customers with a facility to download copy invoices has greatly reduced the time wasted locating and sending copies of lost invoices," states Steve.

It is hard to stress the importance of an informative up to date website. Website visitors are typically quick to identify sites that are stale with outdated content. Whereas a couple of years ago simply having a Website was a sign of being a progressive organization, today a site that is outdated or lacks finesse can be perceived in a very negative manner.

Geotechnical Instruments utilised a number of WebPortal's extended features

including 'WebPortal Article Manager' and 'WebPortal CMS' to deliver up to the minute, rich dynamic content to their customers. "The control we now have over our website as a result of WebPortal is invaluable," says Steve. "Creation and maintenance of pages, spec sheets, press releases are managed by a single intuitive application, in short it couldn't be easier," he adds enthusiastically.

Another area which is often overlooked is the ability to utilise your own website to conduct some of your internet marketing.

Give-aways, and adverts containing specific calls-to-action can help to drive sales and attract new customers. Geotechnical instruments utilise the 'WebPortal Ad Manager' to drive customers to specific products

from their sites homepage. "Thanks to WebPortal with a few clicks of the mouse we are able to keep our customers informed of the latest products and specials we have to offer," says Steve. "Internet marketing was something we were keen to embrace and WebPortal seems to have all the angles covered", he concludes.

Conclusion

Geotechnical Instruments are very enthusiastic about being a global leader in the market of Gas Analysers. Their need for a total integrated system is driven by the desire to lead the field in this international market. Steve Billingham is so confident of the advantage WebPortal gives them in this international area, he would recommend WebPortal to any company wishing to

reap the benefits. "I am sure WebPortal will continue to play an ever increasing role within our business. The savings in time, lost orders and increased efficiency made this totally automated system a clear choice over any stand alone web solution. Our Business requirements were very complicated, but Solweb's professional and methodical approach to the integration of WebPortal has provided us with a solution which more than meets our needs." he concludes. Summing up his thoughts he concludes. "It is refreshing to work with a company that takes the time to understand what we want and has the expertise to deliver real solutions to the challenges we face rather than try to fit our issues round their solution."

