Case study:
GPH Builders Merchants

GPH
BUILDERS
MERCHANTS

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GPH Builders Merchants has been at the forefront of the building supplies industry for four remarkable decades. Providing everything from cement mixers and diggers to concrete blocks, materials and tools to keep builders building.

GPH has always had its customers' needs at the forefront. By continually responding and adapting to evolving business needs, GPH has incorporated new technology, talent, and ideas to expand to four locations and an eCommerce store.

In this case study, we delve deeper into their digitalisation journey and share how GPH achieved significant stock reduction with EazyStock.

The challenge

Group IT Manager Steve Greig and the GPH team were feeling the strain of managing 25,000SKUs across four locations and an eCommerce platform manually.

Without an inventory management tool, stock controllers were led by intuition and supplier offers when ordering stock. Monthly rolling average forecasting and an unstructured ordering process meant supply didn't match demand, with overstocking and understocking common.

They needed a solution to enhance their ERP system (Epicor BisTrack 3.9) to enable data-driven inventory management, alleviate their inventory management issues and combat increasing stock levels.

Other issues for GPH stemmed from the lack of visibility and year-end reporting. Running annual year-end reports meant issues with obsolete or excess stock weren't picked up until it was too late. This meant selling stock at a discount to free up capital and make room for new stock. Steve needed a more efficient and responsive solution with excess and obsolete stock visibility to react faster to problems.

Read on to find out how GPH found the perfect solution in EazyStock, which improved access to materials across their branches.
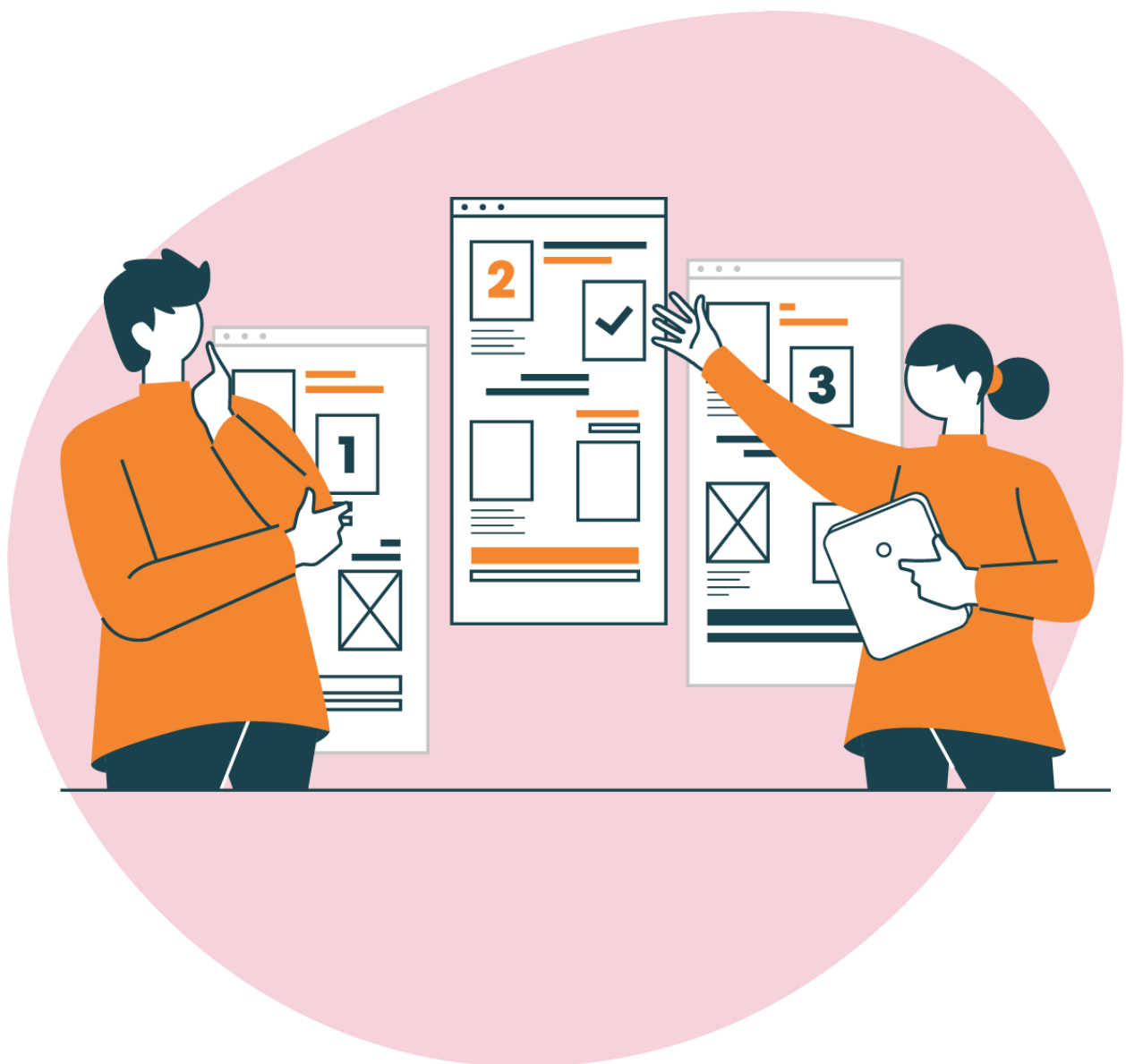
The solution

In their quest to optimise their operations and efficiencies, GPH engaged a stock consultant, which set the stage for positive change. Then Steve attended a Builders Merchants Federation (BMF) event, which focused on technology. Here, he stumbled upon EazyStock's Chief Revenue Officer, Peter Drakeley, demonstrating their inventory optimisation software.

"It was perfect timing," says Steve. *"During the demo, Peter went through all the benefits of EazyStock and what it could do, which fitted with what the stock consultant was saying. I booked a demo immediately. I had no previous experience of inventory optimisation software before, but Peter was showing how EazyStock, with its Syncron pedigree, could address all our pain points, and it just made sense to use software to make things easier and more efficient."*

EazyStock stood out from other systems because although the system itself uses complex, world-leading algorithms and calculations in the background, the user interface was simple. He felt it was a good fit for the team.

"Having an intuitive and straightforward interface was an important factor for us when choosing the right software due to varying IT skill levels among our team. EazyStock gets the balance right between offering complex functionality contained in an easy-to-use interface, making it the perfect solution for GPH!"

Steve presented EazyStock's benefits and the potential outcomes for GPH to the MD and the Board, who didn't hesitate to agree.

The next step was implementing EazyStock, with the invaluable support of Cristina, GPH's dedicated customer success manager. Cristina worked with Steve and, along with some assistance from Mark Chapman, Head of Customer Success, developed export scripts to ensure GPH had all the right data in all the right places within the EazyStock system.

Steve's concerns about team engagement and willingness to adopt a new system were quickly alleviated thanks to Cristina's impressive training skills.

"One of the main things that stood out to me during the implementation process was the training. We ended up doing it all online due to the pandemic and opted for smaller training sessions with all our staff across the business.

"Cristina is an impressive trainer. She really engaged the team – even the less tech-savvy among us – and demonstrated how EazyStock can be easily utilised to make better buying decisions. She made the transition less scary, and everyone's adopted it well, which allowed us to roll out EazyStock across our branches successfully."
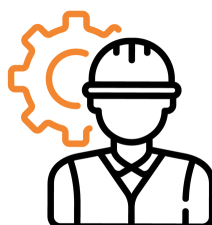
Delivering effective training that works for the company is critical to success, which is where EazyStock's unique Customer Success model shines through, as Cristina explains.

"As training is included in the EazyStock subscription, I could work with Steve to develop a systematic approach to training that would bring the best results. We split the users into different groups with tailored permissions so everyone learned what they needed without GPH worrying about additional costs. We adapted the training in each session, so we didn't overwhelm users with information."

While the team at GPH were training, they ensured they did rigorous testing to get to know the system and ensure they were getting the correct data in and out. They were never hurried, and Cristina provided support where necessary.

Since going live, Steve knows Cristina is always on hand to provide further support at no extra cost. *"The team is really responsive. Anytime we've got a question or need help understanding something, I know I can drop Cristina or the EazyStock support team an email or pick up the phone, and we'll get the help we need – fast."*

Steve finds EazyStock's ways of working refreshing.
"We've worked with multiple software companies in the past where as soon as you're live, the support and follow-up starts to drop off.

"We've never felt like that with EazyStock; we always feel supported. Cristina and the support team feel like an extension of our own team."

"Before, we had staff counting stock and writing on bits of paper...thanks to EazyStock, we don't need bits of paper...we can go back and look at demand as well as use the data to get more accurate forecasts...and can make educated decisions based on that data...we can see this benefit occurring every day."

Steve Greig
Group IT Manager

The results

EazyStock has been a game-changer for GPH Builders Merchants, and they couldn't be more pleased with the results. The days of manual inventory management have been replaced by a system that provides constant stock health visibility, boosts efficiency and slashes excess stock levels.

GPH now has the tools to scrutinise demand types and excess stock and observe how items move through their product life cycle. Being able to identify dying or obsolete items enables GPH to phase out obsolete items proactively.

The most significant benefit to GPH has been their ordering process, as Steve explains.

"Before, we had staff counting stock and writing down lists of what they needed on pieces of paper. They would then return to the office and enter the data line by line. Thanks to EazyStock, we don't need bits of paper, and we don't need to spend time entering data."

Now, EazyStock handles the heavy lifting. GPH have a streamlined ordering process that eliminates paper and error-prone manual data entry. By sharing data between EazyStock and BisTrack, GPH can generate purchase orders directly from EazyStock data, removing the time-consuming process of manually creating purchase orders and duplicating work.

That's not all. With EazyStock's ability to interrogate products at a granular level, the team can now accurately forecast demand and gain more insights into their stock.

"We can go back and look at demand, as well as use the data to get more accurate forecasts. **This helps us understand what's going on with our stock,"** explains Steve.

The comprehensive reporting and data available to GPH also make life easier. **"We're far more proactive when looking at our stock and identifying where demand is changing and can *make educated decisions based on that data.*"**

£80,000

Saved in six months using EazyStock's redistribution functionality

Let's not forget the significant cost savings GPH are reaping. EazyStock's redistribution functionality alone saved GPH over £80,000 in just six months by moving stock from the branches with excess levels to the branches where there was more demand rather than purchasing the product again from the supplier.

Before, each location managed its stock independently, resulting in new stock orders even when another location had a supply or was overstocked.

"What's great about EazyStock is that we can see this benefit occurring every day; we don't have to wait until year-end. We can then report on these savings and changes monthly and share them amongst our management team."

The seasonality and outlier functionality have been eye-opening for GPH. The team can swiftly respond to changes in demand and create more accurate demand forecasts. As EazyStock flags outliers, GPH can choose whether to include unusual sales in demand forecasts based on whether they are one-offs or signs of a trend to avoid over- or understocking.
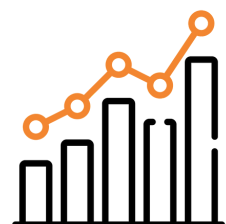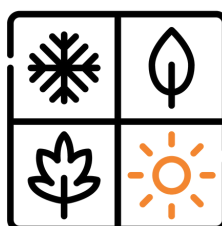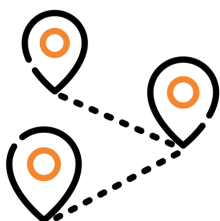
"EazyStock enables us to react quickly to changes in demand than what we had previously, allowing us to adjust our buying decisions based on the most up-to-date data available.

"Another great feature of EazyStock is the order fill-up functionality, which tells us which products have upcoming demand and need to be ordered next in the event that we don't meet the supplier's MOQ on a particular purchase order. This way, we can bring those items forward, filling the order with products we actually need rather than increasing the quantity of existing lines."

The benefits don't stop there. The GPH team now also have more time to educate themselves and gain a deeper understanding of their stock.

"Everyone involved in purchasing now understands their stock a lot better. They have a lot more time for analysis and ensuring the stock data is accurate. The team are working more efficiently and feel more confident in their roles."

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Find out more

To find out how EazyStock can revolutionise your inventory management processes, don't hesitate to get in touch for a demo.

Book a demo