



# Case study: Essco Group



# Essco Group

Essco Group is a Southampton-based supplier with the complex task of managing thousands of products for customers in industries where having the right stock, at the right time, is critical. Since becoming independent in 2007, they've experienced rapid growth, expanding into new product lines, which led to a move to larger premises in 2024 to meet increasing demand.

From communal and district heating systems to Swedish hydronic solutions and custom-built assemblies, Essco's work spans everything from housing developments to industrial plants. Their customers rely on them to make installations smooth, keep projects on schedule, and even reduce their carbon footprint.





## The challenge

**Essco's variety is a strength, but it also makes stock management complicated. With 7,300 SKUs and project-based orders coming in daily, the team was under pressure to keep shelves stocked without locking away too much cash in excess inventory.**

Their manual stock management process, which relied on SAGE and Excel, created unnecessary complexity and costly mistakes. Excess stock reached a high of £1.8 million, while obsolete items stayed buried in spreadsheets, leading to write-offs, negatively impacting Essco's bottom line.

Simultaneously, the upcoming demand for other items was missed, causing stockouts, lost sales, and unhappy customers.

Project-based, one-off orders would end up logged as standard stock items, triggering repeat purchases for products with no future demand. Recognizing the need to move on from outdated spreadsheets and costly errors, the team implemented Microsoft Dynamics Business Central as their ERP system. However, they found the stock ordering and management lacked functionality, leading to costly tailored adaptations.

They needed a system that could work seamlessly to enhance Business Central to:

- Reduce stock value from £4.5 million
- Visualize excess stock, bad stock, obsolete, and fast-moving lines
- Better manage SKUs
- Reduce excess stock
- Improve supplier relationships and plan for shutdowns



**The solution**



## The solution

**After comparing several options, EazyStock's user-friendly interface and ready-made Business Central connector made it stand out.**

From the outset, the EazyStock team took the time to understand Essco's challenges and tailor support to get their inventory back on track. This was made even easier thanks to EazyStock's unique dedicated customer success managers.

Starting with Marek Glaszewski, Essco are now in the safe hands of Michelle Pederson. Michelle works closely with them to ensure they get the most out of the system. With EazyStock, Essco know the level of ongoing support comes as standard, whether they speak to Michelle once or a hundred times.





# The results

**Before EazyStock, ordering stock was slow, stressful, costly, and error-prone. With General Manager James Cole in charge, EazyStock has provided the control and confidence they were missing, transforming James and John Cole's (Assistant General Manager) working lives.**

They now look forward to Mondays, thanks to reduced stock value, high service levels, and more time for strategic planning.



\*excluding project stock

*“Mondays used to mean two and a half hours of manual ordering. Now it’s 10 minutes, and I can even do it from home with a smile on my face for the rest of the morning.”*

— James Cole

## Smooth Business Central integration

James and John invested time setting up Microsoft Business Central so the data feeding into EazyStock was clean, accurate, and in the right format. Clear processes mean every new SKU is now set up on Business Central with the correct parameters, from lead times to delivery days, ensuring EazyStock’s forecasts and recommendations run smoothly.

## Cost savings without compromising availability

EazyStock has delivered £300,000 in savings through reduced stock value for regularly stocked items, and 24% less excess stock, without hurting service levels.

Using EazyStock has given Essco total visibility of what to order and when.

*“**We’re sitting in a good place.** We check EazyStock’s recommended orders on Monday morning. The rest of the team knows that **EazyStock isn’t ordering for ordering’s sake**, and the pain that could come with ordering too much stock,”* says James.



**James Cole**  
General Manager

It's also boosted morale in the warehouse team, as James explains. *"It's nice to see the shelves full. Before, we'd have big gaps, and the warehouse would ask why we didn't have certain items. We'd panic, knowing it would be another week before we could get a delivery. It gets rid of all that noise."*

Before EazyStock, the manual ordering process was draining. The warehouse team would provide a list of items that James or John would need to enter line by line. EazyStock has transformed this mundane task into one they actually enjoy.

*"I quite look forward to seeing what EazyStock has recommended this week. It's giving us lines or SKUs that we would have forgotten about,"* says James.

Smarter demand recognition has been a game-changer for John. EazyStock now recognizes items with regular demand that were previously lost in spreadsheets and adds them to recommended orders, which has boosted sales:

*"We've got more sales out of EazyStock recognizing this demand,"* explains John. *"If we didn't have EazyStock, we'd be telling the customer it's two to three weeks. They go elsewhere, we've lost that sale and future sales."*





**"It's nice to see the shelves full. Before, we'd have big gaps, and the warehouse would ask why we didn't have certain items. We'd panic, knowing it would be another week before we could get a delivery. It gets rid of all that noise."**

**James Cole**  
General Manager



## Staying ahead of supplier shutdowns

Order calendars have revolutionized planning and enhanced relationships with suppliers with long lead times and seasonal closures.

***"As our Swedish suppliers shut down for the whole of July, we've ended up running out of stock because we didn't place orders in time. We've also been caught out with shipments from Germany, so we've been more on the ball this year, due to EazyStock's order calendars,"***says James.

***"I think this is the first year we didn't run out of stock during the summer,"*** adds John.

## Winning back time

John has been impressed with how EazyStock slashes the time spent on ordering. Instead of 40-45 minutes reviewing standard items to check order history and lead times, the team can now run through EazyStock's recommended orders in just 10 minutes.

This leaves more time to focus on more strategic issues and special projects – and make tea!

***"As the team is busy, it's great to have more time to focus on those other projects,"*** says James.

EazyStock has transformed James's Monday mornings:

***"The ordering was mundane, and you didn't look forward to it especially on a Monday morning, knowing you had to tackle those 2.5 hours, and that's when mistakes were made Now, I can do it so quickly. I can even do it from home. You know, you've got a smile on your face for the rest of the morning".***

## Happier customers, lower costs

Improved product availability hasn't only made the warehouse team happy. Better availability means happier customers and far fewer complaints about lead times.

*"We promise next-day delivery for orders placed up to 2 pm," explains John. "If we go back to them saying, Oh, sorry, it's going to take two weeks to come in from Sweden, they'll go somewhere else. They might have someone on site fixing a boiler, and it could ruin their job if they can't get the necessary product."*

It's also reduced the need for express orders, cutting down expensive express shipping costs.

*"If a customer really needed something, they would ask us to get it on a plane from China. That's not £100, it's £1,500-£2,500, so we've saved massively on freight costs, and it's had a positive effect on the bottom line."*

## Confidence in complex assemblies

With complex assemblies to manage, EazyStock ensures every Bill of Materials (BoM) component is ready when needed to deliver complete assemblies.

*"I type that supply into EazyStock, and it gives me all the items that I need to keep on top of, as well as that item. This makes a huge difference in ensuring availability when some items are coming in from China with a 26-week lead time," says John.*



**John Cole**  
Assistant General Manager



## Forecasting with precision

James's instincts on required stock levels are now backed up by EazyStock's advanced forecasting functionality, which considers more variables than just last year's demand.

EazyStock recognizes seasonal demand patterns for heating products, building these into forecasting calculations to prevent over- or under-stocking.

## Ongoing support that feels like part of the team

James was impressed by the smooth and personalized onboarding. ***"We started with Marek, who was always available and easily contactable. He always replied straight away. When Michelle joined, she picked up exactly where Marek left off. She's also good at keeping us on our toes to ensure everything is on track and EazyStock is running smoothly."***

***"It's brilliant for me because we've got so much going on,"*** James continues. ***"It's great to keep things on our radar. It's like having an external colleague."***

As the team grows, Michelle has delivered extra training, with more planned to take full advantage of KPIs and reporting functionality.

***"The results Essco has achieved so far have been fantastic, and it's still early days; there's so much more potential for them to tap into. I'm excited to keep working with James and John and explore more features and see just how far we can take their results,"*** adds Michelle.

## The future

Neither James nor John can imagine going back to the old way of working.

*"I think I'd be a bit lost, to be honest," says John. "I'd be spending more hours at work after work and in the mornings."*

It's not something James wants to consider. *"You'd go back to the old school way when you'd have to go downstairs and look at the spots on the shelf, get the pen and paper out. It would add more hours to the day. Monday mornings would become painful – I'd want to stay in bed."*

James is relieved to be more proactive, looking ahead and thinking more strategically, rather than firefighting, with the whole business, even the directors, confident in the stock position.

*"The whole business now has confidence in our stock – even the directors know stock is in a good place."*

James's advice to anyone considering inventory optimization software is simple:

*"If you want to improve your sales and margins, then having the correct stock on the shelves is going to get you the result quicker than not having a stock system."*

*"I'd never talk about stock outside of work, because it was such a mess. It wasn't a good story to tell. Now, I'm more than happy to talk about EazyStock in the pub. It's a good story to tell, because it's had a positive influence on our business – I'd certainly encourage other businesses to use it."*





# Find out more

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business, get in touch.

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