

# Digital Upscaler

## Case Study

### HOME CURTAINS

**Sector:** Home furnishings

**District:** Nottinghamshire

**Support Accessed:** £40k Technology Grant Funding and 1-to-1 Digital Technology Advice

**Digital transformation on track: How the Digital Upscaler Project helped Home Curtains (UK) Ltd pull together IT expertise, funding and innovative systems and software solutions to streamline operational processes and accelerate growth.**

**Home Curtains had felt that they were in danger of getting left behind from a digitisation perspective, and felt the need to address this, to remain competitive and realise ambitious growth plans.**

One of the key objectives was to fully modernise the firm's IT infrastructure. With a strong focus on improving business process efficiency, it was clear that investment in advanced IT solutions, specifically an Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP) and Warehouse Management System (WMS), would be a major step-change for the business. Knowing that it would provide full integration and automation of management of business processes, including accounts, supplier invoicing, payments, and stock control, ultimately increasing profitability, the business began exploring funding opportunities and was signposted to the Digital Upscaler Project by Home Curtains' long-standing IT provider.



#### Summary of Outcomes:

- **Order taking efficiency enhanced:** Sales teams now have the latest stock data at their fingertips. This allows them to rapidly confirm availability at the point of order, driving up sales productivity and improving customer experience.
- **Turnaround times accelerated:** The business is now able to fulfil orders much more swiftly, reducing the time from 'order placed', to 'order dispatched', by around 50% since the Digital Upscaler Project went live.
- **Online capabilities elevated:** Their ecommerce platforms have been linked to the ERP system and successfully re-platformed for enhanced functionality and user experience.

Working closely with Digital Upscaler Project adviser, Prashant Gandabhai, substantial grant funding was secured and in 2021, a state-of-the-art ERP and WMS system was successfully integrated in 2022, allowing Home Curtains to work and vastly improve core operations throughout the business. The support received throughout was extremely valuable to Home Curtains, as Stacy Clifford, Finance Director and project lead explained:

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**Prashant was an absolute godsend. He became our adviser some way into the project and made an immediate impact. He spoke my language and had a clear understanding of the benefits of financial audits. He went above and beyond and helped us get all of our ‘ducks in a row’ – I really appreciate his input and expertise and he was the driving force in ensuring we met particularly challenging project timescale objectives.**

Stacy Clifford, Finance Director

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### About the business

Home Curtains (UK) is a second-generation wholesaler and manufacturer of household textiles and soft furnishings, which has been established for over 35 years.

Based in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Home Curtains is one of the areas business success stories, enjoying an annual turnover, in excess of £5million and employing a 35-strong workforce, many of whom are locally based.

The firm, which today is led by its founder's two daughters, works across several channels: It sells to traders and independent home furnishings retailers through its wholesale operation, along with several significant B2B relationships, becoming the preferred supplier to some of the UK's largest mail order businesses.



### What challenges were Home Curtains facing prior to engaging with the Digital Upscaler Project?

As a business, Home Curtains was at risk of lagging behind in terms of digital transformation. Before engaging with the Digital Upscaler Project, many financial and stock management tasks were still handled manually and across the business, departments were not equipped to embrace smart working practices. This was brought into sharp focus during the pandemic, when it became clear that the IT systems in place, were simply not advanced enough to support modern business practices, such as remote working.

Over and above a fundamental overhaul of the hardware and software, one of the most business-critical improvements needed, was to power up the Home Curtain's digital capabilities from a business process management perspective. High on the agenda was harnessing IT systems, which would facilitate more considered financial decision-making by centralising data and enhancing inter-departmental collaboration.

### How has the Digital Upscaler Project helped Home Curtains (UK) meet these challenges and what benefits, have already been seen?

Technology Grant Funding from the Digital Upscaler Project, underpinned by expert advice and guidance from experienced adviser, Prashant Gandabhai, culminated in the successful procurement and implementation of a new IT Infrastructure, which spanned the entire business and encompassed four key outcomes.

## Key Outcomes

**1. Integration of a new ERP system, which went live in May 2022:** The new system is already providing a host of improvements in business process management. It supports and connects many of Home Curtains' core business functions, including sales, inventory management and accounting. Latterly, the tools provided have become an essential component in the firm's financial planning and reporting capabilities.

Result: *"With the system in place, we're able to quickly view and analyse gross margins by both product and customer for the very first time, which will help us drive the business forward."*

**2. Installation of high-speed Wi-Fi throughout the business:** Next generation connectivity means that Home Curtains can access and apply a series of cloud-based innovations to its stock and distribution operation, including introduction of hand-held warehouse management applications, which is driving efficiencies throughout the stock management cycle.

Result: *"Members of our logistical teams have already reported that improved connectivity is making their lives much easier. Additionally, the ease of use of the hand-held scanning system affords the business much more flexibility in terms of the warehouse experience levels now required. This means we're able to get on board a broader range of personnel, in addition to being able to utilise existing, non-warehouse teams, to support in the warehouse during peak times."*



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**The Digital Upscaler Project has helped us to identify and implement major technological improvements. We've already seen significant efficiencies, which I'm confident will be instrumental in ensuring the business continues to go from strength-to-strength in the future.**

Stacy Clifford,  
Finance Director

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**3. Elevation of the business websites:** Re-platforming has vastly improved functionality and user experience and elevated e-commerce capabilities.

Result: *"As the system is linked directly to our e-commerce platforms, trade partners (will have) and customers have an up-to-the minute view of stock availability, driving a more seamless experience. In addition, it's allowing us to be much more dynamic in a marketing sense. E-commerce teams now find it much simpler to plan and deliver effective campaign initiatives, which are directly linked to stock levels."*

**4. Implementation of a new access and entry system:** The business now benefits from an advanced automated clocking system.

Result: *"Several benefits to HR, process and employee wellbeing are immediately evident. Functionality gives a 24/7 view of occupation status, which provides many benefits, including:*

- Providing real-time data that powers increased automation in our payroll system.
- Improving building security and automating our fire roll-call system.

### Furnishing an exciting future

With the Digital Upscaler Project now successfully completed, the business is equipped to realise a long held commercial aspiration. Once the new system is fully imbedded, they will have the capabilities to mobilise a major growth strategy, which will see them develop and launch their 'own brand' of soft furnishings, which thanks to the enhanced systems they now have in place.

To learn more about funded advice and support visit  
[www.emc-dnl.co.uk](http://www.emc-dnl.co.uk)