

## COUNTERTOP MANUFACTURER NEEDS TO SELL AND DELIVER PRODUCTS MORE EFFICIENTLY

### Rethinking the process of selling countertops

This client sells its countertops through a variety of channels, including a national home center, which challenged the company to reengineer the process of selling countertops throughout its network of stores. The retailer had become overwhelmed by the amount of communications to which it was exposed for each order. It wanted to offload some of this burden back to the other partners in the manufacturers' networks.

This client knew that transforming the complex, manual sales process would require a technology-based solution with interfaces to ERP and web processes. The solution should provide the ability to communicate with high-tech and low-tech companies alike using various electronic communications protocols, such as EDI, Web Services, FTP, email, and fax. The company found its solution in the Cilio Partners Portal.

### Lack of visibility into orders and partner activity

This client brings in millions of dollars in countertop orders each year. To fulfill each order, the company first has to receive the order, either from a fabricator/installer or from one of its retail channels. The order then must flow to the area distributor, the local dealer, and the customer. As an order progresses through the workflow, additional communications must be delivered back and forth through this channel, including information about order changes, cancelations, invoices, payments, warranties, rebates, and audits of completed orders. The company had been using a predominantly paper-based process to distribute the orders through its partner network and manage this transaction workflow.

As a result, the company had two challenges to overcome:

1. Reduce the time, cost, and errors induced by the current process. Dealers were quoting orders manually based on paper or PDF versions of product and price lists, which often could be outdated. The current process required extra work to reconcile each order because orders were measured by CFIs by the square foot, whereas distributors measure material by the slab. It provided no visibility to orders as they were being fabricated and installed at the customer site. Determining the order status, or making any changes to the original order, required extra time to locate the order and track its progress through the workflow.

### Testimonial

*"Cilio is a good group that's very, very responsive and engaged. I like that it's simple and we don't have to go through a chain of command."*

*Residential Marketing Director  
Countertop Manufacturer*

2. Despite having a large number of accounts, the company was unable to determine which ones were active and which were the most productive sales channels. It wanted to increase the visibility of its accounts and bring in new accounts, but it lacked the data to support these objectives and a platform for launching an incentive program beyond product samples and literature.

With these challenges in mind, the client turned to Cilio Technologies and the Cilio Partners Portal.

### **Integrating trading partners in a single system**

The client team initially engaged with Cilio to solve the order distribution and management problem. Based on The client's challenges and requirements, Cilio built a prototype portal, which was the basis of the Cilio Partners Portal, a web-based system designed specifically for the complex order workflow associated with installed home products, such as countertops. It allows the client to define and link its entire partner network, including manufacturers, dealers, distributors, and installer/fabricators in a single framework so they all are connected to the order throughout the order lifecycle.

The portal allows the company to digitally store its product information, including specifications and price, as well as partner information such as billing and account information and contacts. The teams defined business rules and communication protocols for the order workflow so that orders and order information would automatically flow to the right channels at the proper time.

Because the Cilio Partners Portal is delivered using a "software as a service" model, the client was able to begin defining its partner network right away using the existing framework. There was no costly investment in software, hardware, and custom development.

### **Connecting with partners and improving sales insight**

"Cilio does very well in terms of understanding your needs, working towards them, and then is very diligent with follow-up," said the client's Residential Marketing Director.

With the Cilio Partners Portal, the client has dramatically reduced the manual touchpoints for each order. Retail partners now have to take action only to initiate and issue payment for each order. Though they can see the progress of each order, they no longer are driving the workflow.

Meanwhile, the client is now able to connect more directly with its partners and customers. The company has a direct line of insight into which products it sells through each retailer or dealer, which it did not have before. With this information, the client can more effectively manage its inventory and the movement of materials through its distribution channels.

## Incentive program delivers new insight about partner network and sales activity

With its partner network defined in the Cilio Partners Portal, the company engaged with Cilio for sales incentive management services using the web-based Cilio incentives program. Cilio worked with the client to understand its sales goals and design a sales incentive program that monitors purchases made by the client's customers and provides awards based on their performance according to set goals. Awards include travel-based incentives as well as merchandise.

The incentives system is linked to the Cilio Partners Portal. So while the client uses the portal to communicate incentive programs to its partners, the incentives system automatically captures purchase information and calculates awards in real-time. Each customer knows their status at any point in time and the client can readily determine how well its promotions are working. Cilio provided the training and support services needed for the client and its partners on an ongoing basis.

With the combination of the Cilio Partners Portal and incentives program, this countertop maker now has a clearer picture of what its active dealer base looks like. This provides the basis for future incentives programs and ongoing management of the dealer network.

"The idea behind this dealer program is that in the first couple of years we can build a base to grow on. It's a starting point for us," explained the client.

## Gaining visibility and control over the partner network

The company now has a clearly defined partner network that executes orders uniformly following the processes built into the portal. The Cilio Partners Portal helped this client communicate with its network more efficiently and effectively, while gaining visibility and control over the entire network.

"What I value the most about the Cilio Partners Portal is the access we get to customers," said the client.

## About Cilio

For retailers and manufacturers who want more insight into and control over their order distribution and trading network, Cilio Technologies provides a web-based portal for managing and distributing orders through the network of home center stores, manufacturers, distributors, and installers.

The Cilio Partners Portal streamlines the business process, improves communication and visibility, and creates revenue opportunities.

Learn more about the Partners Portal — fully automated, information-rich, rapidly deployed, cost-efficient, and customizable.

For more information, email [sales@ciliotech.com](mailto:sales@ciliotech.com) or call 262-320-0480.