



Picture Credit | Hillarys Blinds Ltd., Nottingham, United Kingdom. Used with permission.

A photograph of a modern bedroom with light purple walls. A bed with a dark headboard is the central focus, dressed in white and purple bedding. To the left is a dark bedside table with a white lamp. To the right is a window with a white frame and a light-colored, patterned roller blind. On the right side of the room, there is a dark dresser with a vase of dried branches and a small clock on a nightstand. The overall lighting is soft and ambient.

Hillarys: Opening Windows of Opportunity for Better Sales Performance with SAP® Enterprise Support

HILLARYS

Company

Hillarys Blinds Ltd.

Headquarters

Nottingham, United Kingdom

Industry, products, and services

Consumer products – made-to-measure blinds, curtains, and shutters

Revenue

£130 million (€160 million)

Web sitewww.hillarys.co.uk**SAP® solutions**

SAP® Enterprise Support offering and SAP Enterprise Support Advisory Council

Window treatments that reflect who we are

The window. Just as no two homes are alike, the way we choose to treat, dress, and display our windows is equally unique. It's more than blinds, curtains, shutters, and awnings. It's about who we are, the image we project, and the atmosphere in which we dwell. This is something Hillarys Blinds Ltd. has understood for more than 40 years. Hillarys reveals its commitment to this understanding by improving its visibility into sales performance with support from SAP.

When Tony Hillary started making window blinds in his garage in 1971, he was a person-to-person business. Today, as Britain's largest manufacturer and retailer of made-to-measure window coverings, Hillarys maintains this personal touch with a nationwide network of 1,000 independent advisors who visit customers in their homes to design and subsequently install bespoke window coverings, custom manufactured by Hillarys.

To streamline its relationship with this network, Hillarys uses a mobile solution based on SAP® Mobile Platform. Advisors use the app for all aspects of their business – to receive sales leads, manage appointments, validate and price proposals, enter orders, take payments, track progress, schedule installs, and much more – all on a tablet or smartphone. This helps improve advisor productivity. But what about performance? How could Hillarys leverage this mobile platform to improve transparency for sales performance metrics and help its advisors maximize their potential?

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Toward a better approach to data analytics

Hillarys is a voracious consumer of data analytics. As a longtime customer of SAP, the company extracts an extensive array of key performance indicators (KPIs) from mission-critical software such as the SAP ERP and SAP Customer Relationship Management applications.

The insight from these KPIs was leading edge, but the delivery mechanism had changed little in years. For example, weekly trading meetings, which enable cross-functional reviews of the company's trading performance, saw senior managers pour over more than 40 pages of metrics measuring all aspects of business performance. "This approach enabled deep analysis," says Julian Bond, head of information, communication, and technology at Hillarys. "But it took time, and the insight tended to be behind the curve."

What Hillarys wanted was a way to build off the power of its new mobile solution to deliver timely, perceptive analytics using a dashboard approach. "We needed a quick win," Bond explains, "something that wouldn't

break the bank yet would deliver immediate value while demonstrating the power of a new approach to analytics."

One idea focused on helping field sales managers work more effectively with the company's network of advisors. Each manager typically collaborates with 40 or so different advisors in the field – offering encouragement and support from Hillarys to help drive better sales performance. With more timely data at hand, Bond and his team wanted to give the field sales managers the tools they needed to do their jobs more effectively.



40

Sales advisors
per field sales
manager



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Service and support that is more than window dressing

While deploying the enterprise mobile solution – known internally as SAMSON – Bond and his group engaged with SAP experts providing SAP Enterprise Support services to address project challenges. Through these engagements, the company learned about SAP Enterprise Support Advisory Council, which brings together SAP and its customers to co-innovate new services that help companies take advantage of SAP innovations.

Eventually, Hillarys decided to participate in the council, focusing on the area of enterprise mobility. This supplemented the idea for a mobile sales analytics app, which was emerging between the company and its SAP partner AgilityWorks. Bond and his team found

the SAP Enterprise Support Academy program particularly useful. This academy features a portal that acts as a one-stop shop for accessing educational content and services such as best-practice information, tutorials, videos, expert-guided implementations, and meet-the-expert sessions.

“SAP Enterprise Support Academy is a treasure trove of extremely useful information and services,” says Bond. “It allows us to exploit some key areas of knowledge to supplement the existing expertise of our in-house team and AgilityWorks. Leveraging targeted knowledge and expert involvement from SAP enabled us to fast-track the project and achieve a live pilot in a matter of just two weeks.”

“I have come to value the growing resources provided by SAP Enterprise Support services that can significantly support and enhance the capability of SAP customers. The potential benefits are truly immense.”

Julian Bond; Head of Information, Communication, and Technology; Hillarys Blinds Ltd.



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Shedding new light on critical business data

Today, Hillarys draws data from its SAP NetWeaver® Business Warehouse application and pushes it out to the field using the SAP Afaria® mobile device management solution, adopted as part of its original SAMSON project. Adding SAP BusinessObjects™ Dashboards software to the mix has enabled the company to create visually appealing dashboards and export them as Adobe AIR files.

Field sales managers at Hillarys now have the data at their fingertips to more effectively guide sales advisors in their network. Managers can do this quickly enough to allow them to change performance rather than just explain it after it occurs, which improves the dynamic between the business and the field. Dialogues are much more informed. Internal personnel can see things happening faster and communicate to the field in a proactive manner. “For the first time, my people

are calling up sales advisors and letting them know what’s going to happen rather than trying to correct situations that have already gone too far,” says Bond.

For example, a field sales manager might detect an emerging decline in sales conversion success and call up a sales advisor to find out what’s happening on the ground. Perhaps a competitor has stepped in with a new promotion. In such a case, the field sales manager could coordinate with marketing for some targeted advertising or additional promotional support as an effective response – but as the competitive threat emerges, rather than weeks in arrears. “The point is,” says Bond, “we’re now having much more meaningful conversations with the field. This is fostering a greater sense of partnership where sales advisors feel that they’re getting the support they need to do better.”



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Better performance and curtain calls to come

Halfway through the rollout of its new mobile sales analytics app, Hillarys was already seeing tangible improvements in sales advisor performance highlighted by the clear difference in metrics including sales conversion and average order value.

During the rollout, Bond heard a recording of a call from a field sales manager who'd just completed his first week of use. "In all my professional life," he says, "I've never heard a user be so ecstatic about how IT had revolutionized his working life. Our mobile app changed his whole outlook – how he organized his week, how he communicated with the field, and how he can encourage sales advisors to boost performance." Best practices from SAP Enterprise Support were key aspects of this success.

The result has been sustained bottom-line improvements – enough so that Hillarys was able to realize ROI in just a single month. What's more, the success of the implementation has resulted in an SAP Quality Award in the United Kingdom and Ireland region.

It's no wonder that sales managers and others at Hillarys are clamoring for more. Moving forward, Hillarys will be looking for similar opportunities to demonstrate the power of timely analytics – and to leverage the value of SAP Enterprise Support. "If at all possible, we want to take advantage of in-memory computing with the SAP HANA® platform," says Bond. "We're also planning an SAP ERP application upgrade. Whatever the case, we'll be on the lookout for ways in which SAP Enterprise Support can help."

"The success of our mobile sales analytics app speaks volumes about the value of SAP Enterprise Support. With tools, services, and attention to our needs, SAP helped us realize our objectives quickly and at minimal cost."

Julian Bond; Head of Information, Communication, and Technology; Hillarys Blinds Ltd.



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