

datel

protex



designed for clothing and footwear companies

## Case Study: David Luke

**David Luke has been supplying schoolwear, sportswear and scout and guidewear for over thirty years. The company takes a pride in offering ethically sourced, fairly traded products, believing that strong business growth can go hand in hand with leading the market towards a more sustainable future.**

This pioneering approach is reflected in David Luke's application of technology. In 2008, David Luke purchased a Protex solution from Datel to support improvements in its warehousing operations and management reporting. Since then, the solution has evolved in line with changing business and market requirements.

From head office in Ardwick in Greater Manchester, David Luke Managing Director Kathryn Shuttleworth explains how a Protex solution from Datel has supported the company's growth and helped in driving the efficiency of its business processes.



### Key Benefits

- ▶ A solution that helps in managing business growth
- ▶ Modern, paperless technology has revolutionised goods inward and despatch
- ▶ Increased efficiency frees staff to focus on delivering excellent customer service
- ▶ An online portal gives customers the ability to self-serve at any time
- ▶ Continued support keeps the software in line with changing business requirements in a competitive market

### What factors led to the original implementation of Protex?

Our previous system had reached its limitations and could no longer support our ambitions for growth. Given all the size and colour permutations we offer on any single product type, we spent a substantial amount of time reviewing the leading apparel solutions on the market for a replacement that could closely match our complex requirements.

We pruned our shortlist down to just two contenders, from whom we eventually chose Datel. Knowing their strong track record in our sector, we had the confidence that they could provide the expertise to further tailor the software.

For example, we offer an embroidery and decoration service to our retail customers. As part of the implementation, Datel scoped out these requirements and customised the

software to provide this functionality and integrated it within Protex, whereas with our old system it had to be managed separately, using spreadsheets.

**Implementing a system with the scope to affect many areas of your business must have been quite an undertaking.**

Yes, that's why we adopted a very cautious approach to implementing such a major new system, preferring to play safe and have a long project build-up. As it turned out, we were delighted when on day one everything went well and our customers experienced no interruption to service.

**Improving warehouse management was a priority for your investment. How has Protex supported you in this area?**

Protex manages goods inward and despatch. We have paperless picking, so that rather than picking 'by eye', our staff use radio-frequency hand-held devices to scan in the barcodes. The picked stock is then checked, again through barcode scanning. As well as saving time and increasing our internal efficiency, we have virtually eliminated picking errors. It also provides us with a complete audit trail should a customer subsequently query the type or number of goods delivered.

Find out more:

- ▶ visit [www.datelprotex.com](http://www.datelprotex.com)
- ▶ email [protex.marketing@datelgroup.com](mailto:protex.marketing@datelgroup.com)
- ▶ call 01925 849000

## How does Protex help you to differentiate your business in a highly competitive market?

The system is excellent for tracking orders, providing customers with historical information on what they've previously ordered, and helping us to anticipate their needs. Datel helped us to modify our packing list, so that we can highlight for customers any shortfall in their delivery and be proactive in informing them of when stock is next due in. This was a facility that our customers had requested, and being able to respond in this way gives us a competitive advantage.

The system also helps us to predict and meet demand for finished goods, based on the sales forecast and orders already received, so we largely avoid the shortfalls that would inconvenience our customers and affect our business. The demand planning part of the system enables us to deal with the complex task of assessing supply needs across an array of sizes and fits for products and colours. This is essential for our business, as we need to fit children of all sizes. We have so many skus available for one product that it can be difficult to achieve visibility across sizes, but the software helps us to see where stock shortfalls will occur.

***'The Protex system has helped us to improve our efficiency right across the business and we've been able to achieve considerable growth in the past five years without needing to expand our team.'***

## How has the system evolved over time?

Datel provides regular software upgrades and we've added new functionality in line with our changing requirements over the years to provide information even more rapidly on our customers' order history and back orders. A significant early development was launching a business-to-business web catalogue – not just a marketing website, but a true eCommerce site that allowed our retail customers to order online, with the orders flowing through to our back-office systems.

More recently, we have taken online trading to new heights with the introduction of a customer portal, to which Protex interfaces. This gives customers the ability to 'self-serve', so that they can check stock availability, place an order and pay for it, track their order, view their purchasing history with us...these are just some of the functions they can perform round the clock. Individual branches can be autonomous, while their head office retains overall control. The portal is very intuitive and feedback from our customers has been overwhelmingly positive.

All these developments have relieved the burden on our Customer Service team and freed their time to liaise with customers, plan deliveries and focus on the exceptions and queries that really need their attention and expertise.

Meanwhile the technology handles the routine activities and enquiries. We have also moved to Sage 200 Financials which interfaces directly with Protex. We have access to so much management information now and the system is extremely powerful. The reports we can create either within the system or through the Business Intelligence application are providing us

with excellent data for analysing all our operations.

The users moved across to this new system with ease as it is extremely intuitive and has made so many processes more efficient. The monthly management accounts are ready in a very short amount of time and the live data interfacing between Protex and Sage means that we get up-to-date financial information whenever we need it.

## Can you sum up the impact that using Protex has had on your business?

The Protex system has helped us to improve our efficiency right across the business and we've been able to achieve considerable growth in the past five years without needing to expand our team.

Meanwhile, having easy access to accurate, timely management information has been transformative. We can report comprehensively on the financial elements of our business, in addition to the sales and purchasing reporting we could already do in the past. We're fully alert to anything in danger of coming adrift and we have the all-important management control that any

growing business needs for sustained success.

## The partnership with Datel now goes back several years. How has the relationship developed?

The quality of support is excellent and the Datel team are incredibly knowledgeable; they know the software inside out. They have given us every help to create a solid yet adaptable platform for growth and have innovatively developed the system to meet the changing demands of our industry and customer base.

Find out more:

▶ visit [www.datelprotex.com](http://www.datelprotex.com) ▶ email [protex.marketing@datelgroup.com](mailto:protex.marketing@datelgroup.com) ▶ call 01925 849000