



➔ CASE STUDY: Hillarys Group Ltd

## ➔ Improved Communications at Hillarys Blinds could mean curtains for the competition

ProcessFlows SMS Messaging is being used by Hillarys Blinds to enhance their business communications strategy. Having multiple communication channels has increased productivity for Hillarys 1000 strong team of mobile Sales Advisors, resulting in higher lead conversion rates, shorter delivery times and a high level of customer satisfaction.

### Transforming homes with made-to-measure blinds, curtains and shutters

Hillarys Blinds is the UK's largest manufacturer of made-to-measure blinds and window dressings; processing over 6,000 orders and manufacturing nearly 35,000 blinds every week.

The company, established by Tony Hillary in 1971 making blinds in his Nottingham home garage, was a typical one-man business start-up; with Tony doing all the order processing, marketing, advertising and fitting as well.

The Hillarys Group, which includes online brand web-blinds.com and a B2B trade channel, now turns over £105 million annually, employs more than 1,000 staff across three sites and maintains a UK network of around 1,000 self-employed field-sales advisors.

### Field sales advisors produce 85%+ of turnover

Customers appreciate the individual service offered by Hillarys sales advisors – they visit the customer's home, recommend on suitability of style and fabric for their windows and take accurate measurements, they then process the customer's order right through to final fitting.

Providing a personal customer experience is a proven business strategy for Hillarys – over 85% of turnover is generated by the sales advisors – earning the company their reputation of the UK's leading supplier of made to measure blinds with excellent customer service.

### A more efficient sales team

The Company recognises the importance of technology and good communications and has invested extensively in every area of the business to optimise efficiency and improve business-critical communications.

If sales advisors have uninterrupted access to the internet, email, voicemail, text messaging and 'the back-office', directly from the customer's home, product availability can be checked and orders placed with the order processing system there and then. Productivity immediately increases, business conversion rates are higher and delivery/fitting time frames are reduced.



**Text messaging is a key part of Hillarys mobile communication strategy**

ProcessFlows supplied a server-based SMS messaging solution, Text Message Server, to Hillarys, integrating it with the existing SAP and email systems to enable the sending/receiving of text messages from within these familiar environments.

Paul Mellors, ICT Systems Engineer at Hillarys, spoke about the business drivers for implementing a text solution; *“We wanted to provide our mobile Sales Advisors with an alternative to phoning. It’s not always convenient for people to receive a phone call and leaving a message causes delays. People are familiar with text, it’s unobtrusive, direct,*

*instant and private and for a business, it’s a very cost effective way of communicating with customers. TMS was easy to integrate with our existing systems and it’s simple to use. Our Sales Advisors now maintain regular contact with head office support, without spending a lot of time talking on the phone.”*

**The latest TMS upgrade has enabled Hillarys to customise their text messages with a unique ID**

An alpha tag (often referred to as a message header or sender ID) allows Hillarys to ID their outbound text messages with text (or numbers) which will appear as the ‘from’ address on the

recipient’s handset. The customer knows immediately that the message is from Hillarys Blinds or Web-Blinds, so the message is less likely to be missed or deleted.

This is also good for branding, reinforcing the Hillarys name. As they have the technology, Hillarys could use alpha tag texts for marketing campaigns - it’s an easy way to differentiate and then track the success of each campaign.

**Overall business benefits**

Paul Mellors concluded; *“Our investment in communication technology has definitely enabled us to process customer orders more quickly and deliver even better customer service.”*