Fuelling growth for a dairy product leader

Darling Romery achieved business transparency and insights with solutions from Times 3 Technologies and Sage X3

Over the past 28 years Darling Romery has grown from a family farm business to a highly successful dairy product supplier, serving multiple national retailers. It recently called upon Sage Platinum Partner, Times 3 Technologies to explore how a new ERP system could assist its goals for continued growth and product diversification.

Every day, somewhere in the region of 45 own-managed delivery vehicles leave Darling Romery's main base in the Western Cape of South Africa, bound for various retail outlets. It's an operation supported by a further set of depots, giving them coverage across much of the country.

The company first used the Darling brand to sell milk products before expanding to other dairy offerings and fruit juices. Then sister company Darling Olives was created, which today sells an impressive range of olive jams, pastes, rubs, chocolate, extra virgin olive oil, flavoured olive oils and even olive soaps.

Company
Darling Romery

Location
Darling, South Africa

Industry
Fast Moving Consumer Goods

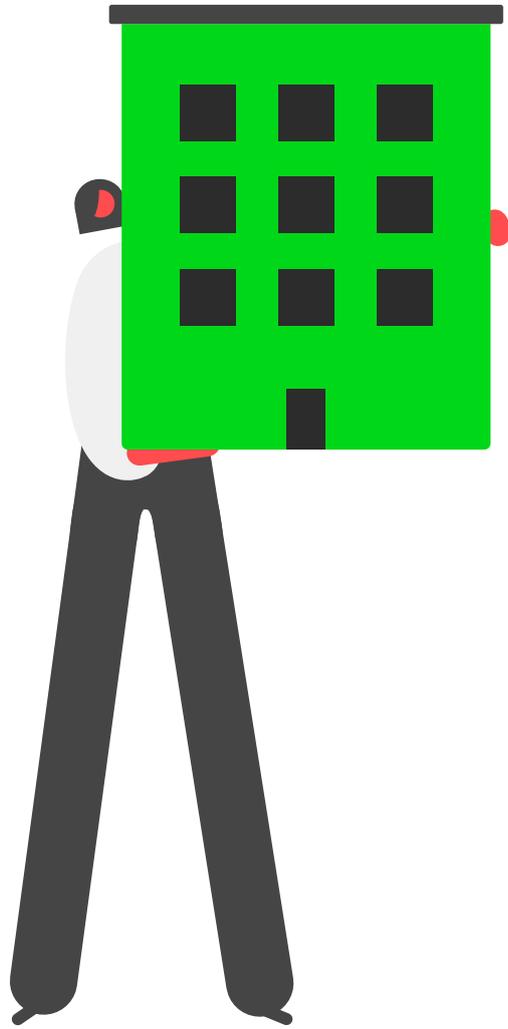**Sage Products**
Sage X3

Partner
Times 3 Technologies

About Darling Romery
Darling Romery began as a family farm business almost 30 years ago, and has now become a highly successful dairy product supplier that serves multiple national retailers.

The challenge

To fuel its growth still further, Darling Romery knew it needed to move away from its legacy ERP system. As Times 3 Technologies Director, Stephen Howe comments:

"Although the system was purpose-built, it did not supply the business intelligence required to make key business decisions rapidly, in real time. So dashboards, getting the KPIs, and distribution of reports was not something that was easily enabled for them."

Like many FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) companies using a legacy ERP system, Darling Romery were relying on a significant number of manual processes and could not leverage end-to-end business insight.

"They really wanted to begin using enabling technologies to start trading up and down the supply chain. To expand and include their customers and their suppliers as part of the overall chain. They did not have workflow. The procurement process was not enabled. Stock availability across all the depots was not there."

The solution

Darling Romery was very careful in its evaluation of numerous different solutions before choosing Sage X3 with implementation from Times 3 Technologies.

After a list of key considerations and criteria were satisfied, Darling were encouraged to approach other Times 3 clients for references, to see how Sage X3 had worked for them.

Importantly, this also provided eye-opening insight in terms of implementing a new ERP solution. As Stephen comments:

"Clients often don't realize the amount of work or the enormity that they themselves are undertaking. Those great references gave them further insight to understand the challenges. Darling were able to go in there with their eyes open. I believe the solution capability and our transparency were the two prime reasons that they chose Sage and they chose Times 3 Technologies."

From start to finish, implementation took six months, covering finance, distribution, sales and manufacturing. In addition, Times 3 Technologies developed a delivery manifest module and an EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) interface to connect the supply chain.

Stephen explains: "[With the EDI] we are able to bring the data from the various different suppliers, automatically bring it through, and price it. This is a major benefit, because in the FMCG world pricing can literally change on a daily basis."

As a business selling highly perishable natural produce, speed of order processing is paramount. Orders often received at close of business have to be in-store as early as 4am the next day.

Times 3 Technologies looked to meet this need to pick, pack and dispatch at lightning speeds, and in the case of some products such as yoghurt, even manufacture to order.

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Stephen Howe
Director, Times 3 Technologies

"We were able to use Sage's development framework and create numerous additional features to meet the requirements behind the manufacturing process and ultimately build up what we refer to as a delivery manifest. That delivery manifest then goes through a whole routing process to determine what product goes out—and what vehicles need to be delivered where."

The fast nature of the industry also means the retailer needs the invoice before the goods are actually even packed in the vehicle. So, Times 3 Technologies implemented e-invoicing within this process.

From order intake, through to delivery, invoicing and potentially any specific pricing claims—the whole process is automated through a single EDI interface.

The bottom line
Darling Romery is now able to deliver in excess of 1,500 orders a day, without requiring people to manually capture those orders. Automation has resulted in significant cost savings and given the company competitive edge, as a fully connected supply chain that utilises EDI means it can receive, process, deliver and invoice in very tight timeframes.
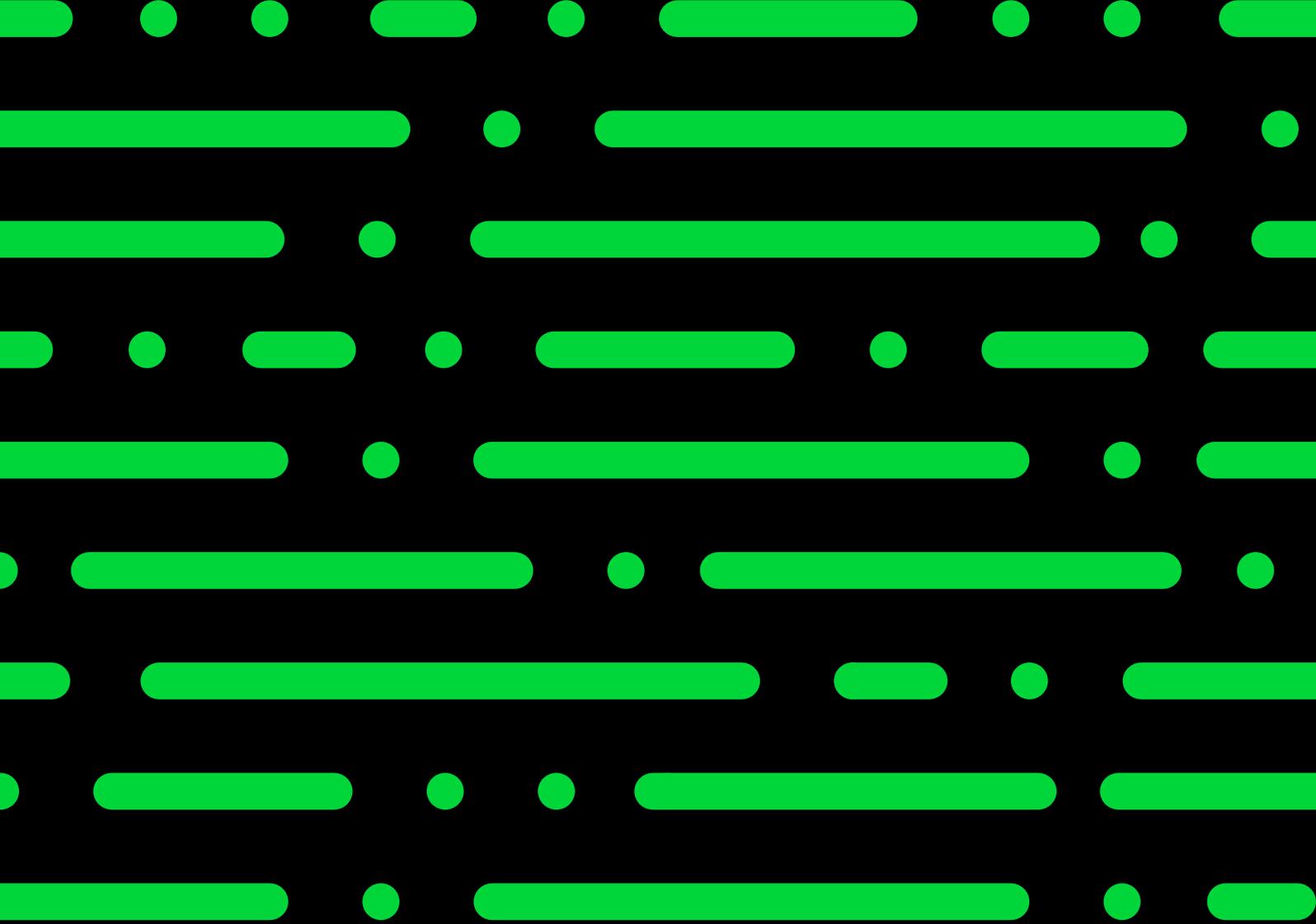
Executives at Darling Romery now have better visibility into the business, for example, they can see stock available nationally in near real-time, and understand future delivery shortages in advance. Reporting has been automated and management accounts can be generated at the push of a button. For those users wishing to view real-time KPI's, these are available on dashboards across devices. The software has also enabled Darling Romery to automate various workflows, including procurement.

The future
The significant improvements detailed here stand Darling Romery in good stead for future expansion, in terms of customer reach and new product launches.

Through the evaluation, development and implementation process, Times 3 Technologies has become a trusted advisor. Stephen explains how this is part of the Times 3 ethos:

"What we try to do is essentially solve business requirements, creating a mutually beneficial relationship, which encompasses the client, ourselves and Sage as part of that solution."

Sage