

## NATIONAL RETAILER USES CILIO PARTNERS PORTAL TO TRANSFORM COUNTERTOP PROGRAM AND BUILD BUYING POWER

### Countertop program lacks buying power of a national vendor

As a national retailer in the home improvement industry, this company sells installed products that range from roofing, siding, insulation, doors, windows, flooring, cabinets, countertops, fencing, decks, and rails. The company not only sells these products, but also provides the services to install them in homes and businesses.

In its countertop business, this company deals with a number of countertop manufacturers and hundreds of fabricators/installers that prepare the countertops for the customer site. Despite the company's nation-wide presence, its countertop program was cumbersome and required many transactions with a variety of fabricator/installers representing many brands of material.

"We didn't have a national countertop program," explained the company's Program Developer, Business Programs. "We enabled hundreds of different fabricators to set their own pricing and negotiate with each of our stores, one-off. We didn't have the buying power of a national vendor," he added.

It was critical for the company to get more control over an agreed-upon pricing strategy with its vendors. It required more control over what it was selling from a countertop perspective, while its manufacturers required more visibility into what they were selling.

### Web-based portal captures vendor information in a single system and distributes order information in real time

The portal is customized to coordinate with the retailer's branding so users have a seamless experience dealing directly with a company system. It allows the company to capture vendor contact and billing information, price lists, specifications, and warranty information in a single repository that is interfaced to its ERP applications. Store associates can now capture orders in the portal, which automatically distributes the order information in real time to the proper manufacturers and fabricator/installers based on business rules and codes.

The portal has been integrated with many ERP applications using standard EDI transaction, web services, FTP, email, or manually entered web-based transactions. This variety of communication methods allows users to share information according to their level of technical expertise. The portal is set up to receive and send information via the latest EDI standards, yet communicate with less technological users through fax or manual transactions.

### Testimonial

*"The Cilio Partners Portal enabled us to get full visibility into the countertop program across all stores – to do large-scale negotiations that covered all of our stores. We were able to manage the business to institute national programs that match cost for cost what any local installer could do."*

*Program Developer,  
Business Programs,  
National Retailer*

"There are a lot of off-the-shelf products that do this type of work," said the company's Director of Store Selling Systems and Store Support. "Where it gets difficult is in the space of countertops. The fabricators don't possess a lot of technology consistently, so you can't force a full, integrated system on some of these vendors, which a lot of those packages require. Cilio enables a web interface and URL so that anyone can go to a web site and pull their orders. It's very user friendly."

The client had been looking into possible solutions when it was introduced to Cilio by one of its countertop vendors. With specialized knowledge and experience in manufacturing, retail, assembly, installation, and financial controls, Cilio was able to suggest a web-based portal solution. This solution would allow the retailer to distribute orders and collect information about all of its countertop vendors in a single system, while managing and tracking orders electronically throughout the order lifecycle.

The retailer decided to adopt the Cilio Partners Portal and worked closely with Cilio throughout the implementation of the system. It is offered via software-as-a-service model, which means the client had no up-front investment in hardware or software and was able to avoid costly custom development. It paid an up-front setup fee and now pays a set fee per order. Employees and their vendors simply access the system through the web with user IDs and passwords.

"Because the portal is being kept in a server off our systems, there is very little strain or load capacity issues for us," said the company's Director of Store Selling Systems and Store Support. "It's easier for a retailer to do all their mapping to a centralized location and that hub does the rest of the work to the different variants that feed into it. I'll do it once and will be linked to 5, 10, 100, or 1,000 different suppliers. It's easier on us and our IT. And because it's outside our firewall, there are a lot fewer security concerns."

### Portal provides leverage and control of partner network

With a single system in place to capture all countertop orders and communicate with all countertop vendors, this retailer was able to:

- Leverage its relationships with material vendors and their fabricator/installers to obtain a more competitive national cost, based on volume
- Reduce the number of transactions associated with an order by placing the order with vendors as opposed to individual fabricator/installers
- Enforce a single selling methodology to ensure accuracy at all locations, which ultimately results in improved customer service
- Analyze the performance of all parties to the sale and ensure that only the best performing fabricator/installers service their customers
- Streamline communications with all parties through a central point of contact

### Testimonials

*"Our vendors also were in favor of this because they were having trouble keeping up with all of our stores, sending them orders and dealing with different fabricators and installers. It made sense for them and us to go to one central place for all countertop orders."*

*Director, Store Selling Systems and Store Support  
National Retailer*

"The Cilio Partners Portal enabled us to get full visibility into the countertop program across all stores – to do large-scale negotiations that covered all stores," said a company representative, the Program Developer for Business Programs. "We were able to manage the business to institute national programs that match cost for cost what any local installer could do."

The Cilio Partners Portal also has made it easier for vendors to do business with this retailer. For example, it is now much easier to manage invoices and information coming from the company, such as renderings and EDI transmissions.

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## 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.