



Increased sales and customer activity with visibility across all field sales operations gives Howarth Timber the sales edge

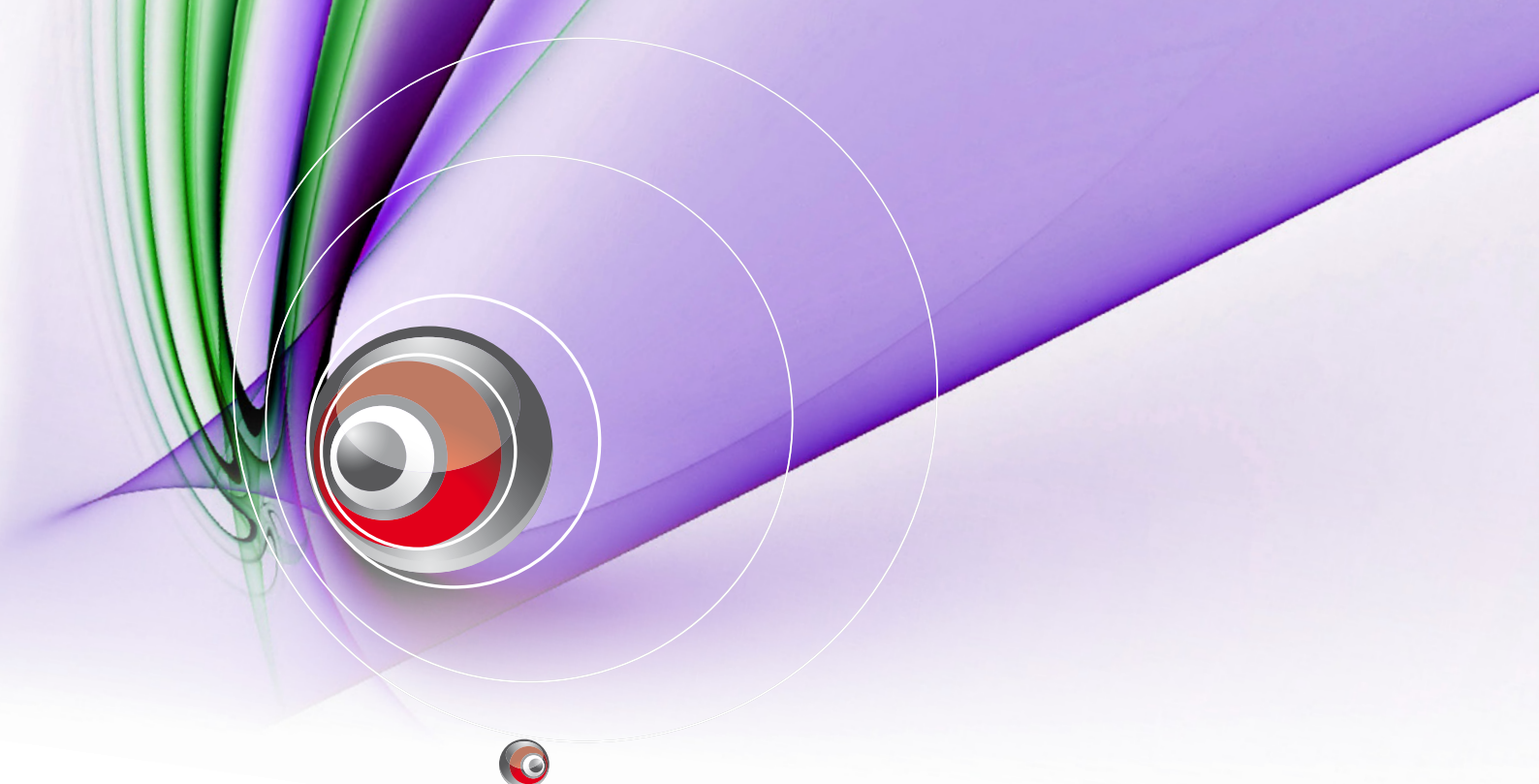
## **Howarth Timber** Standardises on sales-i for Sales and Customer Intelligence Across its National Sales Force

The Howarth Timber Group encompasses 28 Timber and Builders merchant branches, Howarth Windows & Doors and Howarth Timber Engineering. Its origins trace back to the 1840's and today has expanded from one-man to over 1000 employees. With its network of timber and builders merchant branches throughout England with facilities including specialist timber treatment, milling and machining, the company provides a complete service to professional tradesmen, major construction companies, self-builders and committed DIY enthusiasts.

Mark Terry, National Sales Manager at Howarth Timber & Building Supplies, understands well the complexities of managing a large, nationally dispersed field-based sales force with the need for customer visibility and activity tracking to make sure that the Company's share of spend and customer service levels remain high. In his early days at Howarth Timber & Building Supplies he introduced a sales reporting system to deliver sales activity information to sales management but over a year ago recognised that the business needed a more sophisticated integrated sales and customer intelligence system that would proactively alert sales people to changes in customer buying behaviour and operate on mobile devices as well as laptops and PCs. Mark was introduced to sales-i and soon embarked on a programme to roll out a full sales and customer intelligence capability to his national sales force.

"My view is always do it properly or not at all, and that is exactly how we approached this sales-i roll-out," explains Mark. "We began by trialing the system with 6 salesmen and from each experience we honed our use of the system to get maximum benefit for the individual sales person and the company. That way the sales people had a sense of 'ownership' of the system and so adoption was easier and as national sales manager I was getting what I needed; complete and transparent visibility of our customers and our sales activity."





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*Mark Terry, National Sales Manager  
at Howarth Timber & Building Supplies*

As a result the sales teams warmed quickly to sales-i recognising that it enabled them with a complete gap analysis view of their customers, and delivered proactive alerts to their mobile phones if sales went up or down and identifying who to target with what products.

“We moved from a system that told the sales person very little, to sales-i, which completely empowers them to sell more and do it in less time,” adds Mark. Howarth Timber & Building Supplies also makes extensive use of sales-i’s CRM functionality and to date has already recorded 20,000 meeting notes providing detailed information on each account. “This visibility of which customers have had calls and how frequently these calls are made is like gold dust from a customer services point of view. It allows identification of accounts that are getting too much or too little contact. We have immediate knowledge and can identify how to plan our calls and sell smarter. It also means this information stays safe and updated within Howarth Timber even if there is a change in sales personnel.” Mark cites a recent example where a field-based sales person reversed roles with a desk-based employee in the business and once a new secure login was allocated by sales-i, they simply swapped mobile phones giving the new sales person access to instant, up to date information on his sales territory and customers.

Now with sales-i spreading across the field-sales business Mark is also rolling out the technology to branch managers and extending the breadth of information that sales-i is giving to the sales teams. “sales-i has already had a real impact on our sales business,” adds Mark. “Every month this year my sales team has reached its sales target and I directly attribute this to sales-i. I am now looking closely at call planning within sales-i to minimise travel time between appointments. Considering the price of Diesel, if I can logically sequence sales calls geographically as well as being opportunity-driven, that will have even greater impact on improving efficiency and saving costs.”

Paul Black is sales-i’s co-founder and CEO and adds, “Howarth Timber’s success with sales-i is in no small way down to Mark’s roll-out approach to deliver it to discrete sales groups, take feedback and learning, and then use that to secure buy-in from the rest of the sales force. His national sales teams can see the benefit that sales-i gives them in their day to day account management, helping them sell more and faster. Introduced properly, as Howarth Timber has done, sales-i is a massively important tool in any sales person’s armoury.”

Embedding sales-i further into the business, Mark has recently created ‘super users’ who train new starters on Howarth Timber’s use of sales-i helping them to get up to speed quickly on the system. “We empower our sales starters with sales-i on mobile phones and in their homes on laptops. We supply the information they need on their customers via sales-i alerts keeping them focused on sales opportunities and changes in buying behaviour. With all of that to hand, who wouldn’t want to work for Howarth Timber?!”