



SMD Networks

Success Simplified

CASE STUDY · UK FOODSERVICE WHOLESALE

From a phone line to a 75-person back office.

How our founders built and led the back office of a UK multi-depot foodservice wholesaler, from five people and one desk in 2018 to eleven functions today.

98%

order accuracy

28→14

debtor days, halved

30→1,500

customers a week

~1/3

of like-for-like UK cost



● AT A GLANCE

A wholesaler that grew without growing its UK overhead.

BUSINESS	SIZE TODAY	CUSTOMERS	OUR ROLE
UK foodservice wholesaler, delivery and cash & carry	£70m+ turnover, 1,500 customers a week	Takeaways, restaurants, ethnic trade, caterers, retail	Founding team that built, led and ran the back office

This case study is the track record of SMD Networks' founders, delivered while leading the business's back office from 2018 to today. The business is not named, to protect its confidentiality.

● THE STARTING POINT, 2018

Five people, one desk, about 30 customers.

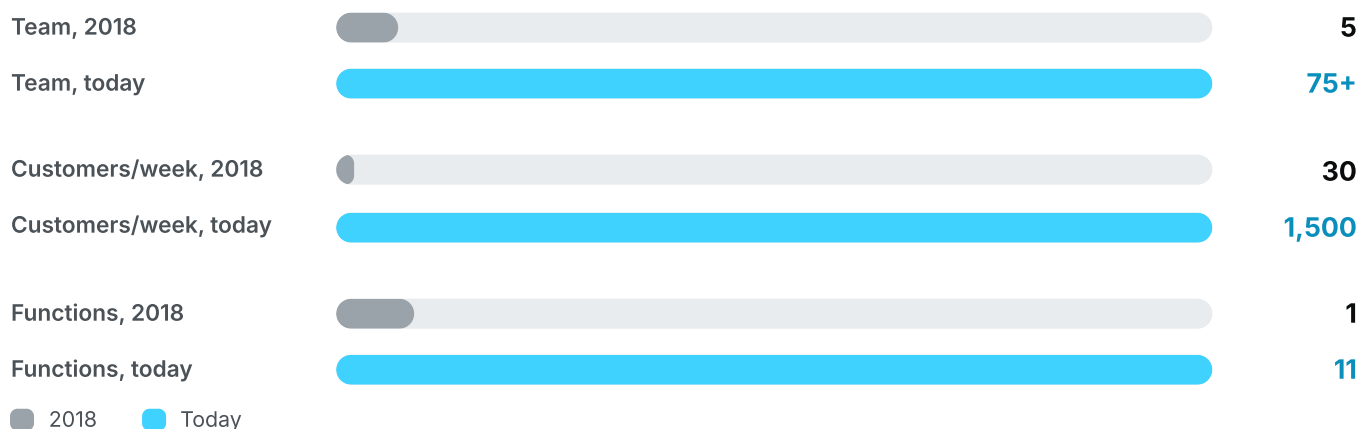
The business took most orders by phone. The office ran on paper, memory and a few long-serving staff. Customers waited at order cut-off, mistakes reached the van, and nobody had time to chase overdue accounts.

We started with a single order-to-cash desk of five people taking and entering orders for a handful of UK customers.

● WHAT THE OWNER NEEDED

- ✓ Orders taken and entered right first time, every day
- ✓ Customers answered quickly, on the channel they prefer
- ✓ Cash collected faster, without upsetting good accounts
- ✓ Room to grow sales without adding UK office cost
- ✓ Clear numbers to run the business on

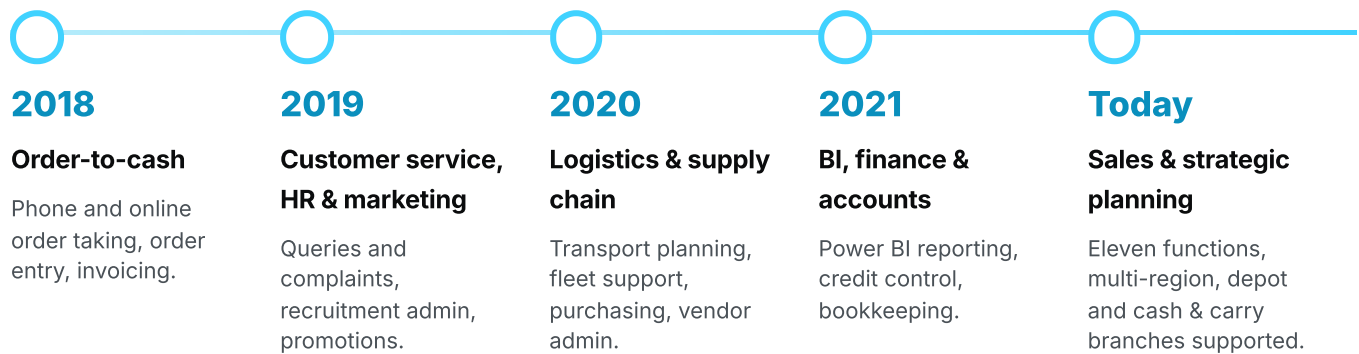
● GROWTH, 2018 TO TODAY



**● THE APPROACH**

One proven desk at a time.

Each function was added only after the one before it was working. That kept risk low for the owner and built trust with the UK team, step by step.

**● HOW THE BACK OFFICE RUNS TODAY**

- ✓ 75+ people across eleven functions
- ✓ 20 order-to-cash agents serving 1,500 customers a week
- ✓ Open 7 days a week, 9am to 6pm UK time
- ✓ Supports a distribution centre and cash & carry branches
- ✓ Orders by phone, WhatsApp, online and mobile app

● THE TOOLS

- ✓ Custom-built ERP for orders, stock and accounts
- ✓ CRM with custom development for pipeline and leads
- ✓ Cloud telephony for the order and service desks
- ✓ WhatsApp for customer orders and updates
- ✓ Power BI for daily reporting to management

The lesson: owners don't need a big-bang outsourcing project. They need one desk that works, then the next one.



● THE RESULTS

What changed, in numbers.

98%

order accuracy

97%

call answer rate

92%

customer satisfaction
score

28→14

days average credit
(debtor days)

14.5%→19%

gross margin, 2018 to today

+20%

revenue growth from
existing customer
accounts

+1,100

new customers,
through lead
generation and online
ordering

~1/3

of the like-for-like UK
operating cost

● SERVICE LEVELS

~5 min

cash & carry order
processing

Next day

delivery order fulfilment

2 days

customer service case
lead time

7 days

a week, on UK hours

● NEW MARKETS OPENED

With orders, service and credit running reliably, the business expanded into new segments without adding UK overhead.

Retail

Chinese

Desserts

Fish & chips

Catering

Coffee houses & cafés

Institutions

Figures reflect the business's operating results during the period our founders led its back office. Gross margin and revenue results were achieved by the business as a whole, with the back office as a key contributor.

**● THE HARD PARTS**

What we had to solve, and how.

Bringing a manual team along

CHALLENGE

The UK team was used to phone, paper and memory, and wary of new ways of working.

WHAT WE DID

Changed one process at a time, trained side by side and coordinated in real time until the new way was the easier way.

Speaking the customer's language

CHALLENGE

Many takeaway customers, especially in the Turkish trade, order by local product names rather than brand names.

WHAT WE DID

Built that product knowledge into the order desk and its training, so orders were right first time.

Moving customers online

CHALLENGE

Customers were used to phoning in and unsure about apps, online ordering and new ways of contacting the business.

WHAT WE DID

Showed each account the real time it would save, supported them on WhatsApp until it stuck, and turned the freed-up capacity into lead generation.

● CREDIT CONTROL

Debtor days halved, from 28 to 14.

Collections moved from "when someone has time" to a daily routine: clear credit terms at account opening, polite and persistent reminders by phone, email and WhatsApp, and weekly debtor reporting to management.

● WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE

- ✓ A dedicated credit desk
- ✓ Daily ageing report in Power BI
- ✓ Escalation rules agreed with sales
- ✓ Slow payers chased early

● CUSTOMER SERVICE

97% of calls answered, 92% satisfaction.

One trained team handles phone, WhatsApp and online queries with a two-business-day lead time on cases, so customers get the same answer whichever way they get in touch.

● WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Agreed scripts and price rules
- ✓ Training in customers' own terms
- ✓ Every case tracked to closure
- ✓ Weekly KPI reviews

**● WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU**

The same playbook, starting with one desk.

SMD Networks brings this experience to independent UK foodservice wholesalers and cash & carries. You never commit to more than you've seen work.

01**Back-Office Health Check**

Two weeks, fixed fee. We map and cost your order, service, credit and reporting processes, and hand you three quick wins plus a starter Power BI dashboard.

Fee credited if you go ahead

02**Pilot one function**

Ninety days, usually the order desk or credit control. A dedicated team in your systems, on UK hours, with a weekly KPI report.

30-day exit clause

03**Scale at your pace**

Add customer service, sales, logistics support, finance or BI one desk at a time, with a named team lead.

Grows with you

● WHAT WE LEARNED THAT HELPS YOU

- **Start where it hurts most.** Usually the order desk at cut-off, or overdue debtors.
- **Run side by side first.** Your team sees it work before anything changes.
- **Speak your customers' language.** Product names, channels and habits matter.
- **Measure every week.** Accuracy, answer rate and debtor days, agreed up front.

Book a free 30-minute back-office review.

No obligation, no hard sell. A clear view of where time and money are going, and an honest view of where we can help.

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