



Mitchells & Butlers

Corporate Profile

Mitchells & Butlers is one of the largest restaurant and pub businesses in the UK. With over 1,600 establishments throughout the country, at least one of the company's brands is part of the fabric of life in almost every town or village. Today, the company serves over 125 million meals and 435 million drinks each year. This equates an annual spend of over £1 billion (USD 1.3 billion) on 11 key categories including food, drink, technology and facilities.

The company's business strategy is to develop long-term relationships with an established trading partner community of fewer but bigger players. The goal is to create partnerships where suppliers can play a proactive part in helping Mitchells & Butlers achieve its business goals. The effective and timely sharing of accurate product information is essential to the success of this strategy.

Chris Collings, Head of Product Program at Mitchells & Butlers, confirms that this was not happening every time, before the company selected GXS in 2009. "All of our product information was held on spread sheets. The data quality could be poor and it was difficult to manage," he says.

Business Challenge

Mitchells & Butlers are working with their suppliers to develop greater transparency and better forecasting, to help them respond quickly to market trends and shorten supply chains. Chris Collings is responsible for the team that accepts product information from suppliers and ensures that accurate information is available wherever it is needed in the business. This includes restaurants that need the information for menus and pricing, chefs for recipe development, accurate stocking and replenishment, and product information at the tills.

To provide this information, a number of different business systems have to be populated and coordinated, and historically that meant spread sheets were heavily utilized. Chris explains: "This was a big challenge for us; with so much data re-entry needed there was always the risk of error. It was also extremely complex to control as we often did not have a single instance of a product."

One of the biggest challenges was ensuring the profitability of new menus. When designing menus for brands or concepts the food development manager would have to work with product information in spreadsheets, often containing more than one instance of a product as well as inaccurate product information.

AT A GLANCE

- 125million meals sold each year in restaurants and pubs
- £1 billion spent annually on categories including food and drink
- System holds information on over 10,000 products from over 340 suppliers
- One of the first GS1 implementations within the food and drink industry
- GXS ensures product data is 100% accurate



“It was clear that we needed two things to increase our business efficiency and improve the accuracy of our business forecasting,” comments Chris. “We needed to create master item data to give us a single view of a product throughout all of our business systems. Also, and just as importantly, we needed a means to ensure that we were working with data that was 100% accurate. That was the vital foundation upon which everything else could be built.”

The Solution

The company decided from the start that they wanted product data to comply with the GS1 global standard and were one of the first companies to introduce GS1 standards into the food and drink industry. It implemented a repository for master item data, creating a single master copy of data that flowed directly into their other systems. An added benefit of this was it provided an effective recipe management capability. Mitchells & Butlers utilize GS1 data pools to get required data in the standard format they need.

“The result is that we now have a single instance of product data that is available to everyone. Chefs know that the data they use to create their menus is accurate and we achieve the profitability we expect. GXS has created a GS1 compliant recipient data pool for us, where our suppliers enter their product information. This provides us with a standard method of effective item set-up, management and synchronization. For the first time, we can be assured that the data in our systems is completely accurate,” said Chris.

Since going live a year ago, over 10,000 products from over 340 suppliers have been added into Mitchells & Butlers systems via GXS. The company’s supplier list is well established and many newer entries are new products from existing suppliers now.

Chris comments: “This project was so important to our business that we mandated our suppliers use GXS as the only source that we would receive GDSN compliant product information through. If a supplier cannot send GDSN compliant data via GXS, we would not trade with the partner. Suppliers entered product information and once that was done, maintaining and amending products is very easy. Suppliers can retain full ownership of their data. This also helped us to identify any bad data and correct issues. We were able to eliminate product duplication and remove products that we no longer carried from our systems.”

Additional benefits have been discovered, in particular, the ability to introduce value added information, such as allergen and nutrition details so that suppliers can provide more detailed information about their products. Chris says: “Today’s consumers are much more interested in having the knowledge about the food we serve and they expect to be able to make informed decisions about what they are eating. We are able to provide in-depth food information in our restaurants and on our menus. In addition, our chefs are able to consider nutrition and allergies when creating their menus.”

In order to achieve all of this, Mitchells & Butlers worked in partnership with GXS to ensure that the correct value added fields are available within the GS1 standard. “We

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— CHRIS COLLINGS
HEAD OF PRODUCT PROGRAM
MITCHELLS & BUTLERS



have a good working relationship with GXS. We discuss the changes that we would like to see and they look at the best solution for how these can be incorporated into the GS1 schema,” says Chris.

The Results

Chris describes the benefits to Mitchells & Butlers as ‘almost endless’. The company now has a single view of all product information, information that can be quickly and easily added by suppliers and fed automatically through all of the relevant business systems. Everyone within the organization is now working with accurate information that makes recipe development and cost forecasting much more effective. Suppliers retain control and responsibility for their product data and the GXS ensures that the data entering the data repository is correct and complete.

However, Chris believes he can still achieve more. “Our next goal is to publish a greater depth of product information directly, be that via our websites, Apps or directly onto EPOS at site. Customers should be able to get important accurate information on our menus when they want, either in the business or at home. GXS makes all these possibilities achievable for us by delivering the data quality that is foundation of all we do,”

Chris concludes.

NORTH AMERICA AND GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

GXS

9711 Washingtonian Blvd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

US

+1-800-503-9190 t

+1-301-340-4000 t

www.gxs.com

SOUTH AMERICA BRAZIL

GXS Brazil

Rua Bela Cintra 1149,

9º andar CEP: 01415-001

São Paulo, Brasil

Tel: + 55 11 2123 2500

www.gxs.com.br

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA HEADQUARTERS UNITED KINGDOM

GXS Limited

18 Station Road

Sunbury-on-Thames

Middlesex TW16 6SU

England

+44 (0)1932 776047 t

www.gxs.eu

ASIA HEADQUARTERS HONG KONG

GXS International

Room 1609-10

16/F China Resources Building

26 Harbour Road

Wanchai, Hong Kong

+852 2884-6088 t

www.gxs.asia.com

JAPAN HEADQUARTERS TOKYO

GXS Co., Ltd.

Akasaka Intercity 3F

11-44 Akasaka 1-chome

Minato-ku

Tokyo 107-0052

Japan

+81-3-5574-7545 t

www.gxs.co.jp



About GXS

GXS is a leading B2B integration services provider and operates the world's largest integration cloud, GXS Trading Grid®. Our software and services help more than 550,000 businesses, including 22 of the top 25 supply chains, extend their partner networks, automate receiving processes, manage electronic payments, and improve supply chain visibility. GXS Managed Services, our unique approach to improving B2B integration operations, combines GXS Trading Grid® with our process orchestration services and global team to manage a company's multi-enterprise processes. Based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, GXS has direct operations in 20 countries, employing more than 2,800 professionals. To learn more, see <http://www.gxs.com>, read our blog at <http://www.gxsblogs.com> and follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/gxs>. You can also access our public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission at <http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml>.