

## Noble House Distribution Ltd. Increases Sales by 25-50% with Solid Route Accounting™

Noble House Distribution Ltd. from Sherwood Park, AB, Canada, is a distributor that carries approximately 1000 SKUs<sup>1</sup> with six trucks running in the Edmonton area. They have been using Solid Route Accounting™, a mobile route accounting software for DSD<sup>2</sup> distributors, since 2000. In this interview, owner Rick O'Donnell talks about Noble House's experience with Solid Route Accounting.

**SOLID INNOVATION: How has Solid Route Accounting™ improved your inventory control?**

**RICK:** Well, number one, it's allowing us to count inventory a lot easier than in the past. I can control and keep a record of what my drivers are taking out of the warehouse and putting on to their trucks and what they sold. This has made inventory control more efficient. In addition, being able to scan and key in the numbers versus handwriting invoices is certainly a big benefit. And our customer and product lists and all the other information our drivers need is on the handheld, too.

**SOLID INNOVATION: How much has it improved your sales?**

**RICK:** Sales on the truck are up 25 to 50 percent with the handhelds now. With manual invoices, our drivers were doing \$2500 - \$3000 a day. With computer generated invoices, they are writing \$4000, \$5000 or \$6000 a day in my territory. There's no way in the world they could have written that with doing manual invoices.

**SOLID INNOVATION: Tell us how computer generated invoices have helped your company.**

**RICK:** An invoice created on the handheld is accurate, we know it's accurate and the store knows it's accurate. Reducing calculation mistakes on the invoices has been a great benefit to us. In addition, you can not service corporate customers now without having computer generated invoices, the industry doesn't allow it. Corporate customers want the price recorded, the extended price recorded, the GST (the Goods & Services Tax in

Canada) shown and the invoice numbers on the invoice. The invoices we create on the handhelds provide all of that information.

**SOLID INNOVATION: How has Solid Route Accounting improved your relationships with your corporate suppliers?**

**RICK:** There are suppliers out there that won't do business with you if you can't do the monthly and quarterly reporting. When you're a salesman going in to talk to some of the corporates, one of the first things they ask about is the availability to report. If we can't give them the reports they want, we wouldn't even be considered to do that business. The reporting features we have with Solid Route Accounting are more than adequate to fulfill the needs of our suppliers.

**SOLID INNOVATION: Tell us about your auto-buy features.**

**RICK:** With auto-buy, Solid Route Accounting generates orders from our suppliers based on minimum/maximum amounts of inventory that we need on hand and the minimum amounts we can order from a supplier, and we can adjust the orders if we need to. It makes our back office run more smoothly. Without auto-buy, there are only two or three people in our office that can do the ordering. With auto-buy, virtually anybody in the office can do it so we don't have to worry if I'm out of town or if my sales manager is out of town. It just takes that heat off. In addition, as we grow the business, it becomes tougher to do the buying manually (even for the experienced people) because we handle so many SKUs<sup>1</sup>. To have a system that will generate our orders for us with the ability to adjust the orders is a big

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<sup>1</sup>SKU – stock keeping unit; an item in stock  
<sup>2</sup>DSD – direct store delivery

benefit for us from an inventory standpoint.

**SOLID INNOVATION: What reports do you use that help you?**

**RICK:** The reports we use the most help us to track the sales for all of our suppliers and track the sales for all of our customers. In addition, we like the Sales Commission Report, which helps us figure out our drivers' commissions on a monthly basis. For our corporate customers, we generate reports showing what sales we are doing per supplier, and we compare one month to the next month. We generate reports by the SKUs, the sales and the returns. For example, I can figure out my returns in the sandwich industry. There's a certain percentage of stales and outdated product, and by printing out a report on the whole category from one supplier, I can total up the sales and total up the returns, and I know what my returns are per SKU.

**SOLID INNOVATION: What advice can you give to someone who's considering upgrading to mobile route accounting software?**

**RICK:** I tell guys to get as much information as they can and allow themselves a couple of weeks to get used to the new system before they get started. When we first started, we were up and running too quickly. But once we got started, it was smooth sailing and now it's so much easier.

**SOLID INNOVATION: Tell us about the Solid Innovation Client Services team.**

**RICK:** Bryan Shier, Director of Client Services, has been excellent. Whenever we phone and we've got a problem, the Client Services team has done their very best to try to fix the problem. During office hours, we get a call back within an hour. Even on the weekends we've been getting a call back within an hour, but that isn't guaranteed. If we phone on a Friday night after hours and say that we're doing inventory and we've got a problem, whoever has been on call at Solid Innovation has always returned our call within an hour or two. In most cases they've been able to fix the problem right then. If they haven't been able to fix it immediately, we got the call within a day or two with the solution. The service has been excellent.

**SOLID INNOVATION: If you were to talk to your peers in the industry about Solid Route Accounting, what would you tell them?**

**RICK:** As a handheld system, it's great. As an invoice-writing system, it's great. As a reporting system, it's getting better every year. I recommend it to many of the guys now. It serves the purpose very well for the industry needs and as a distributor. It's got a strong support system which we absolutely need because my trucks wouldn't go out without a handheld system.



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