



### Mr Fothergill's

www.mr-fothergills.co.uk

Suffolk  
United Kingdom

### Industry

- Seed Distributor

### Aspin Products and Services:

- MiniSell Sales Force Automation

### MiniSell Modules:

- Call Management / GPS Tracking
- In Call and Territory Objectives
- Undispatched Orders / Sales History
- Field & Exhibition Sales Order Processing
- Credits / Uplifts
- Order & Product Templates
- Questionnaires
- Stock Profiles
- CRM Data
- Customer Specific Pricing
- Online Reporting



■ Mr. Fothergill's use the Opticon H19a

## Mr Fothergill's reap the benefits of using MiniSell

Mr Fothergill's Seeds is one of the UK's most recognisable gardening brands and provides a wide range of products from flower and vegetable seeds to young plants and trees, supplying larger multiples along with retail accounts such as hardware stores, pet shops and garden centres. They implemented Aspin's MiniSell handheld sales order taking software at the start of 2010.

Before implementing MiniSell most of Mr Fothergill's field sales processes were paper-based, with the reps taking down their orders by hand and then faxing or phoning them through to the office for customer services to key into Mr Fothergill's back office system.

However, as Alison Roberts, Mr Fothergill's field sales manager, explained one of the main issues for the reps was not having up to date information to hand when they were visiting their customers:

"We wanted to be able to react to our customers' needs by having live data. Because everything was paper-based our data could be up to a month behind so we often had to call the office asking them to check this or that piece of information."

To manage their sales and merchandising appointments the reps were sent a spreadsheet that showed the accounts that needed to be visited. It was then their job to manage their time and appointments. This meant that there was a certain amount of downtime when the reps could have been out on the road visiting customers.

As well as faxing and phoning their orders back to the office, the reps would also complete a photo-copied call report template which they would then send back to Alison, who in turn would collate all of the details for her reports.

Mr Fothergill's sister company Abacus Cards had been using MiniSell for a number of years, and it was their positive feedback that encouraged Mr Fothergill's to implement MiniSell for themselves.

Each of the Mr Fothergill's reps now carries an Opticon H19a Windows Mobile smart phone running the MiniSell handheld data capture software. Each night, Mr Fothergill's back office system exports a wide range of customer and stock data to the MiniSell DataBridge, which in turn, generates individual data packages to update the reps' handhelds with the latest information. Typically, the reps download their individual data packages first thing in the morning using the Opticon's GPRS connection.

"I now spend less time collating all of the reps' call reports into one large spreadsheet as the MiniSell Online reporting system does a lot of this work for me."

MiniSell enables the reps to take orders, create uplifts, complete customer surveys and enter CRM data against customer accounts. It also provides them with detailed and up to date customer and product information and automatically applies the selected customer's pricing to their orders and credits.

Mr Fothergill's also make full use of the MiniSell's Call module. This appointment management tool provides the reps with a list of completed and outstanding calls, and is fully integrated with the MiniSell diary system, allowing the reps to quickly create and amend their own appointments and cycle back and forth to review previous call history and forth-coming appointments.

When a rep wants to start a call they simply select it from the call list. MiniSell then selects the relevant customer account enabling the rep to create any number of orders and uplifts. Throughout each call, MiniSell provides a number of prompts and warnings to remind the rep to complete all the tasks required, including a mandatory marketing survey. The Call module also automatically logs the start and end time of each call and (although not used by Mr Fothergill's) using the Opticon's H19a GPS facility and records the GPS position of the device at each point.

The reps upload and download their data to the MiniSell Proxy server throughout the day, which then sends this onto the MiniSell DataBridge, where the orders and credits are then exported back to Mr Fothergill's back office system.

Mr Fothergill's office staff also have access to the MiniSell DataBridge manager. Amongst other features, this secure reporting website enables incoming orders and credits to be reviewed, and if needed held prior to processing. It also provides a facility for creating and amending the questionnaires and surveys that get sent out to the reps.

In addition to the handheld software, the reps and managers also have access to the MiniSell online reporting system. The online reporting system provides a selection of different reports including a rep activity summary, a customer summary, a questionnaire summary, a product group sales summary, and a call activity report, which provides a detailed breakdown of each call and is dynamically linked to Google Maps to pinpoint where the rep was when they began and ended the call.

Each report can be filtered on a number of different variables using an extensive drill-down facility. All of the reports and results can be generated to CSV file format for further editing and analysis. As Alison Roberts explained:

*"[With the online reporting system] I now get a detailed break-down of the reps' activity at the end of the day, or on the hour if I really want. I now spend less time collating all of the reps' call reports into one large spreadsheet as the MiniSell online reporting system does a lot of this work for me. It has really cut the amount of time that I have to devote to administration."*



■ Mr Fothergill's provides a product range for all your gardening needs from flower and vegetable seed to young plants and fruit trees.



■ Mr. Fothergill's is one of the most respected businesses in the market

However, MiniSell has made a positive impact on other areas of the business as well, as Alison continues:

*"MiniSell has saved a lot of time for customer services. The amount of time they spend keying in orders and customer history has gone down. They also don't have to spend so much time dealing with queries from both reps and customers.*

*We're also hoping that MiniSell will help us to monitor and control our merchandising activity more effectively. As MiniSell logs the start and end time of each call we can assess how long it takes to carry out different merchandising tasks at different customers.*

*Getting used to MiniSell has been a massive culture shock for the sales team. We've gone from carrying hordes of paper to having all the information we need on just one machine... Everybody has got to grips with the handhelds, even with very different levels of technical ability; all levels have absolutely thrived with it."*

## Aspin Overview

Aspin has been creating and providing accounting and supply chain management solutions for fulfilment operations, distributors and wholesalers, in the UK, USA and Australia for over twenty years.

Our mobile sales force automation application, MiniSell, is used by sales representatives world-wide to perform a variety of tasks ranging from field and exhibition based order taking to merchandising and business intelligence / CRM reporting

**If you would like more information about our MiniSell handheld order capture software, please call us on:**

**Tel: +44 [0]1794 500 200  
or visit [www.aspin.co.uk](http://www.aspin.co.uk)**

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