



Delivering  
Intelligent Business Solutions  
To **World-Class Retailers**

ibs **DEALS**

## Castorama Kingfisher implements ibs **DEALS** from Soft Solutions – **Case Study**

### CASE STUDY

*"We needed a solution that could position itself as a 'meta-referential', over and above the two application environments maintained within our company."*

**Philippe Meurillon,**  
**Director of**  
**Information Systems.**

*Castorama, a subsidiary of the Kingfisher Group, the leading European DIY retailer, has implemented ibs **DEALS** from Soft Solutions to improve their enterprise-wide vendor management process. From initial vendor negotiation through to the posting of vendor allowances, ibs **DEALS** has provided Castorama with a measurable return on investment and competitive advantage in a fast-moving market.*

### THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Shortly after its merger with the Kingfisher Group, Castorama began to evaluate the need for improvements in its supplier negotiation and deal management processes. Driven both by its merger and the increased competitiveness in the market, the company realized that its partially automated process needed to be replaced. The Supplier Performance Project was launched to address not only the business functionality required for improved vendor management, but also to provide a common information platform across all business units so that negotiations and purchases could be better consolidated.

"We needed a solution that could position itself as a 'meta-referential', over and above the two application environments maintained within our company," states Philippe Meurillon, Castorama's Director of Information Systems.

### THE SOLUTION: ibs **DEALS** FROM SOFT SOLUTIONS

After defining business requirements, Castorama began evaluating alternatives available in the market. "There were few viable options, given the fact that many software developers have not addressed the specific requirements of our global activities. ibs **DEALS** was the system which addressed our needs most effectively," explains Philippe Meurillon.

Before final selection of the Soft Solutions applications, Castorama thoroughly tested ibs **DEALS** with a selected team of users. The product was then implemented in a pilot project that confirmed its ability to address the business requirements. The final decision

to implement ibs **DEALS** enterprise-wide occurred in May 2004.

"Soft Solutions brought not only a product, but deep retail industry expertise gained from implementing ibs **DEALS** at other clients. This was very valuable for our project. ibs **DEALS** is an expert tool, integrating real and tangible know-how in the retail business; that was a deciding factor," concludes Philippe Meurillon.

As a decision-support tool, ibs **DEALS** supports both planning and simulating deal terms with suppliers, including contract and discount management, and it provides audit trails to ensure proper completion and accounting for these activities.

For example, a system of analytical reporting verifies that commitments between Castorama and their vendors are met in terms of quality and timing. The tool also integrates to other corporate systems such as accounts payable, so that invoices for off-invoice payments and allowances are issued promptly and payments are properly recorded.

Based on Castorama's specific business requirements, Soft Solutions delivered the fully configured ibs **DEALS** application for testing in November 2004. The company's operations in France and Italy used the new tools for their annual negotiations for 2005. The roll out for Poland was completed in 2005.

"Thanks to the accounting module of ibs **DEALS**, we will be able to ensure that we account for and receive all payments due from our suppliers with no exceptions. We will certainly be more productive than with the former manual system and expect measurable ROI for the business," anticipates Philippe Meurillon.

## **E-LEARNING AND ONLINE TRAINING: A WELL-MANAGED PROCESS THROUGHOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION**

One of the challenges of implementing ibs **DEALS** was the prospect of deploying a single solution in three countries. A common set of specifications was created that reflected the needs across all business operations, and a single solution was chosen that could be tailored for each country. "Planning was a stressful affair under the requirement that contract management be operational by the beginning of 2005. Soft Solutions was able to meet this requirement, and we were delighted," observes Philippe Meurillon.

In conjunction with the solution implementation, Soft Solutions continues to facilitate change management at Castorama through user training. Training is spread out over a period of eight weeks, in parallel with implementation, enabling users to immediately start applying their newly acquired knowledge. Following initial deployment, the ibs **DEALS** standard module for e-learning will be provided allowing each user to learn the system and make necessary changes in how their work gets done.

### **ABOUT KINGFISHER AND CASTORAMA**

Founded in France in 1969, Castorama operates over 100 DIY stores in France, Italy and Poland with combined revenue of 2.5 billion Euros. Castorama was purchased in 2002 by the UK-based Kingfisher Group, one of Europe's largest DIY retailers and third in the world in that sector. With over 11 billion euros in revenues, Kingfisher has more than 60,000 employees, and operates over 600 stores in six countries.

### **ABOUT SOFT SOLUTIONS**

Soft Solutions is a leading provider of web-based retail merchandise management and decision support software. Our customers are multi-divisional, multi-format Tier 1 retailers and suppliers including Carrefour, CVS, Canadian Tire Retail, Capelli New York, Auchan, Group Louis Delhaize, B&Q, Kingfisher, Pinault-Printemps-Redoute, and Galeries Lafayette. Soft Solutions ibs **SUITE** conforms to the latest industry and technology standards, including GS1, and is compatible with multiple databases and industry application server packages. With consistent delivery of measurable top and bottom line business results, Soft Solutions is uniquely positioned to provide global best practices and industry-leading solutions for the fast paced, competitive environment of retailers worldwide. For more information, please connect to [www.ibs-softsolutions.com](http://www.ibs-softsolutions.com)

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