



## Client case study



Founded in 1988, DBD Kitchen Products has grown from a family business operating from a small warehouse and office to become the leading distributor of kitchen appliances to the contract market in the UK.

Through an extensive product range, competitive prices and high service levels, DBD has built a loyal customer base that ranges from independent builders through to the major national property developers. This has driven the company's growth to an annual turnover of nearly £15 million and a staff of 85 employees.

When it comes to audit, like many companies, DBD admits to once holding a degree of indifference. It was seen as little more than a statutory requirement with limited scope to provide real business value.



However, in December 2005, DBD's view was quite literally given a major jolt. Finance Director, Bob Barnard explains:

"Our warehouse and offices were in very close proximity to the Buncefield Oil Terminal. When the explosion hit, we couldn't even get to them for 4 days!" he says.

"When we finally managed to survey the scene, the damage was pretty serious," Bob adds.

Fortunately for DBD, it was able to keep the business running from temporary premises, but some testing times followed.

"The effects of the Buncefield explosion set our business plan back by two years. It really made us think about all our vulnerabilities. It was in this regard that we turned to HLB Vantis Audit," states Bob.

Since 2005, HLB Vantis Audit has worked with Bob and DBD to help identify key business risks and show how audit can take on a more central role in business planning.

"HLB Vantis Audit really make us think," says Bob. "They aren't afraid to challenge us and the result is a more rounded view on managing our business."

One area that has undergone improvement is the operational side of the business. With a high volume, low margin business model, changes to stock holding and order handling processes now play a key role in DBD's performance.

"We used to put most of our focus on sales. With HLB Vantis Audit's help, we have used the audit process to examine our back office efficiency more closely," says Bob Barnard.

"We now have a 'just in time' order and delivery process that reduces our stock holding and improves our cash flow," he adds.



Now, with Buncefield well behind it, Bob is pleased to report that DBD's plans are well on track again and the company is growing once more.

"Our experience since 2005 has really served to focus and sharpen our approach to managing the business," Bob states.

"In this respect, HLB Vantis Audit has played a crucial role by making us spend more time working *on* the business and not just *in* the business."

The future looks good for DBD, with growth expected to come from expanded geographical coverage and diversification into other related markets.



Bob Barnard certainly sees HLB Vantis Audit continuing to play an important role as DBD moves forward, with the audit process now integral to business planning.

"Maintaining a full understanding of market conditions, business risks and potential operational improvements is now at the forefront of our thinking," says Bob.

"For us, audit has gone from being treated as little more than an obligation to become a really valuable business tool," he concludes.

A member of



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