

CASE STUDY



CUSTOMER

Cooks Plumbing

INDUSTRY

Plumbing & Bathroom Supplies

CHALLENGE

Managing disputes and proving delivery of missing goods

OUR SOLUTION

Mobile digital Proof of Delivery Solution

OUTCOME

Instant access to multiple proof points, and significant savings in reduced replacement stock

COOKS REDUCES LOSSES WITH DIGITAL PROOF OF DELIVERY

Cook's Plumbing Supplies is Sydney's largest independent supplier of plumbing and bathroom supplies to trade and retail customers. Established in 1969, it has seven metropolitan Sydney stores and two branches in Brisbane, and can deliver nationwide. Cook's is also a foundation member of Plumbing Plus, a national buying group with more than 160 stores around Australia.

PROVING DELIVERY OF MISSING GOODS

Cook's uses both its own fleet of vehicles, as well as 3rd party transportation companies, to deliver goods to Sydney and Brisbane metro areas and beyond. Its customers are often home builders who require items such as toilet suites, hot water systems, ovens, rangehoods, dishwashers, copper piping, and more. Often, these sites are unsecured until the home reaches lock-up stage.

When deliveries take place at a time where no one is onsite, Cook's usually leaves the goods somewhere as safe as possible such as the garage or an undercover area. However, due to the high levels of theft that occur at building sites, these deliveries can go missing.



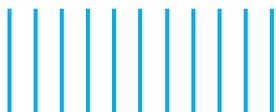


Using manual, paper-based processes made it hard for the team at Cook's to prove for certain what had been delivered, when, and where it had been left.

Alex Hadaj, head of IT, Cook's Plumbing Supplies, said, "If a builder arrived at the site and didn't immediately see the goods that had been delivered, they would react in a number of ways. Sometimes they would simply assume the delivery hadn't been made, and leave the site, despite the fact that the goods were sitting around the corner. This would cause delays for their building project.

"Alternatively, the goods may be assumed stolen, in which case the builder would call Cook's and demand that they be resupplied. Dealing with these queries and losses was taking up a great deal of time and had a real financial cost to the business."

Queries were often made 30 or even 60 days after a delivery was scheduled. Each location made more than 100 deliveries per day. Using a manual system meant that, if a query was made, a Cook's staff member would need to go to the office where all the physical dockets and paperwork were stored and try to find proof that the items had been delivered. This could take hours; if the value of the missing goods was considered to be less than the cost of the time it would take to check the paperwork, Cook's would often simply resupply the goods at its own cost.



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**— Alex Hadaj —
Head of IT**

Alex Hadaj said, "The customer experience is extremely important to Cook's, which is why the deliveries made by Cook's delivery vehicles are free of charge. It's crucial that these deliveries be done promptly and accurately to ensure customer satisfaction and that we weren't holding up their project. However, the inefficiencies in the delivery system meant Cook's was incurring significant costs, which needed to be addressed."

Cook's required a solution that would help it track deliveries more accurately and offer proof to customers that the goods had been delivered as agreed.



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— Alex Hadaj —
Head of IT



A DIGITAL POD SOLUTION WITH INSTANT ACCESS TO MULTIPLE PROOF POINTS

After considering whether to build a bespoke solution, Cook's chose a digitalised proof of delivery solution provided by Upstream. The solution, which integrates seamlessly with the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system Cook's was already using, replaces clipboards and piles of paper with tablets and remote connectivity.

Alex Hadaj said, "A delivery is scheduled from the ERP system as per our usual process and goes into a digital job queue. Rather than the previous paper dockets, each driver is handed a device at the beginning of their shift, which contains all the jobs that have been allocated to them by the transport manager.

"When the driver makes a delivery and no one is onsite to receive it, they can take photos to show where it was placed and to prove that they've been delivered. The solution lets the photos and GPS coordinates of the delivery be attached to the digital delivery docket, all of which is emailed to the customer to advise them that the delivery has been made."

If there is someone on site to receive the goods, the same solution records the proof of delivery along with their digital signature so there can be no question of when and where the goods were delivered.

VEHICLE STOCK CHECKS

The Upstream solution also helps manage the vehicle and stock checks that Cook's conducts before deliveries. Supervisors check the trucks to ensure the goods are strapped on correctly, that the right number of boxes is included, and the delivery isn't missing anything. This is signed off on the device, providing additional proof of what was loaded for the customer, which complements the proof of what was delivered.

REDUCED COSTS IN REPLACEMENT STOCK

Before implementing the Upstream solution, Cook's was losing money due to goods that went missing. The Upstream proof of delivery solution means that the customer is immediately notified of delivery, and that they know where the goods have been left. This reduces confusion and ensures Cook's has fulfilled its duty to the customer.

Alex Hadaj said, "From a financial perspective, the Upstream solution has saved us substantially. Having the reassurance that the goods have been delivered is enormously helpful if there is a dispute. This is something Cook's offers as a value add for customers as part of the free delivery.

"Replacing piles of paper on a clipboard with iPads has been a huge improvement. Previously, the number of delivery dockets was overwhelming, which made it difficult and time consuming to manage the delivery process and to resolve disputes. That's a thing of the past now. With instant digital access to the delivery information the dispute volume has reduced as has the time it takes to answer customer enquiries."



THE BOTTOM LINE



Reduced financial losses from replacing missing or stolen goods



Less time spent checking paper-based POD information to resolve disputes



A powerful way to manage deliveries more efficiently with immediate visibility



Improved customer experience

Checking that the delivery is correct before leaving the warehouse as well as when it reaches the customer has also contributed to increased accuracy for Cook's. And, because all the dockets are now digital, customers can use the Cook's customer portal to search for their dockets and self-serve if they have a query. They can search by order number or other details, then access the proof of delivery documentation including photos and other related information. All of this enhances Cook's customer-first approach.

SOLUTION EXPANSION TO CUSTOMER DELIVERY NOTIFICATION

As a next stage, Cook's is integrating its customer app with Upstream technology to notify users via SMS when their delivery is coming. This means customers can ensure someone is onsite and ready to receive it.

Alex Hadaj said, "Cook's chose Upstream because it was an established company with a decent customer base, proven solution, and a good product roadmap. It was more affordable and customisable, so it delivered a more cost-effective solution than building one from scratch. The Upstream team was knowledgeable and helpful, and understood how our business operates, which led to a successful implementation."

UPSTREAM HELPS BUSINESSES WORK SMARTER, DIGITALLY

With a history spanning over 30 years in the print and document management industry, Upstream is one of Australia's leading content, workflow and print management solutions companies.

Our strengths lie in understanding the immediate and long-term goals for improving processes and reducing paperwork, data entry and duplication, effectively streamlining and optimising workflow. We deliver flexible, cost-effective solutions that alleviate your administrative burden and provide real value to your business.

Upstream's suite of award winning products are uniquely tailored to suit your business needs.

Our solutions include workflow, content management, 'Smart' barcode forms, cost recovery, regulatory compliance, and print management to name a few. We specialise in business processes such as POD, HR onboarding, Accounts Payable automation, Sign on Glass mobility solutions, as well as having extensive experience in document storage and retrieval.

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