

NORTHERN FOODS LEADS THE WAY FOR FOOD SUPPLIERS IN AVERTING MILLENNIUM SUPPLY CHAIN PROBLEMS

Submitted by: Pleon
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Northern Foods have avoided significant cost implications by uncovering a millennium supply chain problem that could affect other, apparently "Y2K ready" food suppliers across the UK. Working with electronic commerce experts GE Information Services (GE), the UK based food manufacturer has discovered, and quickly rectified, a previously overlooked supply chain problem which could have stopped groceries reaching the shelves of key customers Tesco and Marks & Spencer during the first days of January 2000.

"End-to-end trading between ourselves and our trading partners would have fallen over on 1 January 2000 had we not implemented GE's Supply Chain 2000 solution," says Lesley Heron, group electronic commerce manager, Northern Foods. "We believe our testing has highlighted a common problem. Although Northern Foods' cost would have been monetary, other suppliers could find that they will not be able to deliver food to the supermarket shelves after the millennium."

Northern Foods, a manufacturer of a range of grocery and chilled convenience foods, identified the problem after implementing GE's Supply Chain 2000 solution. As an Action 2000 company, Northern Foods is now endorsed as Year 2000 compliant - but it was not only its reputation that would have been at stake had its millennium capability not been tested. "The impact from a cost and efficiency point of view would have been extensive," comments Heron. "The problem GE pinpointed would have stopped paperwork being successfully transmitted electronically to our trading partners from 1 January 2000. Certain Northern Foods trading partners would have been unable to process some of the outbound transmissions, or electronic documents such as delivery notes and invoices. Although the problem was ultimately a simple one, it needed specialist knowledge to fix."

The Supply Chain 2000 service assists electronic trading communities in assessing the Year 2000 status of their Supply Chain. The Service simulates two weeks in the Millennium, including the Millennium Point and the Year 2000 Leap Year Date. The Service cycles through these dates

providing an opportunity to simulate "real Time" Year 2000 testing. Users can then assess weaknesses in their Supply Chain and take action to achieve Millenium capability.

About GE Information Services

GE Information Services (GE) internetworks companies with their business partners through the power of electronic commerce. As the experts in global electronic commerce, GE delivers a full suite of solutions that streamline the extended supply chain, including Electronic Data Interchange, messaging gateways, extranets, electronic catalogues and electronic marketplaces. GE Information Services manages the world's largest electronic community of more than 100,000 trading partners. GE Information Services is part of the General Electric Company, USA and has its European headquarters in Paris with offices in Holland, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Scandinavia and the UK.

More information on GE Information Services in Europe can be found at <http://www.geis.com>.