



Market Leaders in Quality

In this edition of Postcode News, we feature two organisations that are leaders in their respective sectors. Hillarys are the nation's favourite provider of made-to-measure window dressings, and Thompson & Morgan are the UK's largest mail order seed and plant company.

A passion for providing their customers with the highest levels of service and satisfaction has been at the centre of the continued growth and market position of both of these businesses.

Read inside to find out how accurate data helps both organisations best serve their customers and why they have selected AFD as their address & data quality partners.

Great Blinds Think Alike



HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Since Tony Hillary fitted his first made-to-measure blind over 50 years ago, Hillarys has been dedicated to exceeding its customers' expectations at all stages of their buying process.

From the humble beginnings of running the business from a garage, Hillarys has grown to become the nation's favourite provider of made-to-measure blinds, curtains, and shutters, and continues to increase the number of satisfied buyers by delivering high levels of customer service and innovative technology.

THE PROCESS

A customer's buying journey starts with booking an appointment online or via the call centre. Appointments are available 7-days a week, daytime, or evening, to cater for their customer's availability.

All advisors are trained to help customers choose the right

product for their needs. The colour, texture, and look and feel of the room are all key considerations that only come with face-to-face customer collaboration. During the appointment, the advisor also measures the windows. Here there is no margin for error, measurements of both the width and drop must be precise for "made to measure" products.

Once everything is decided and double-checked, the orders are sent to the factory in Nottingham where fabric is cut to size and made to fit the exact specification.

When the order is ready, the customer is contacted and agrees a time slot that is convenient, and an installer attends to fit the products and ensure the customer is satisfied with the completed work.

PRECISE TECHNOLOGY

We spoke with Matthew Lamb, Software Development Manager at Hillarys, to understand more about how technology is helping meet and exceed customer expectations:



"I have been with the organisation for the past 8 years and have overseen enhancements to technology that put the customer first. We must make the buying journey as smooth as possible, and a key part to this is ensuring that contact details are captured quickly and accurately. By deploying AFD's UK address lookup solutions online and for our call centre staff, we can focus on understanding our customers' requirements rather than repeating back addresses.

In addition to improving the speed of entry and not frustrating the customer during their initial

WWW.AFD.CO.UK/ADDRESS-LOOKUP



Knowing that The Postcode People at AFD share our high standards of customer service and environmental awareness, I would recommend them to other organisations that require accurate address data

enquiry, having an accurate address is important because advisors are visiting the customer's home or work premises. It doesn't set the right first impression if our advisors miss appointments or are late, but with up to 12 appointments per day, one address error would have a negative knock-on effect for all the following meetings that day.

From an environmental perspective, by matching advisors to their closest customers we can minimise wasted travel time, fuel cost and carbon emissions. Correct customer address

data helps facilitate these important savings."

INTRODUCTION OF EIRCODE

An Post in Ireland (Eire) introduced the Eircode seven years ago, giving all the 2.2 million letterbox addresses in Ireland their own unique Eircode. Before its launch, mail and parcel delivery relied on the local knowledge of the postie or courier.

Discussing how Hillarys has made use of Eircode data, Matthew continues; "Irish addresses had

previously been problematic. We found that Eircode use was low before the pandemic, but Covid helped improve its use as everyone suddenly became reliant on e-commerce deliveries.

Prior to our implementation of AFD's Eircode address lookup solution it was difficult to match advisors to a customer appointment in Ireland. As an Eircode is a unique property reference, we can now quickly find the address and be confident we are sending the closest advisor.

As the solution from AFD also returns the grid coordinates, our advisors can pinpoint the location of each appointment and help them plan journey times to stay on schedule."

PARTNER SYNERGY

Explaining why Hillarys chose AFD as their address & data quality partners, Matthew said; "I was able to speak with an expert in

address data who answered all my questions and understood the complexity around Irish data. Integrating AFD's UK address lookup and Eircode solution was simple to do, and all interactions have been straightforward. Knowing that The Postcode People at AFD share our high standards of customer service and environmental awareness, I would recommend them to

other organisations that require accurate address data."

Does your organisation have challenges around capturing accurate contact data? Contact our expert team today to discuss your requirements on 01624 811711 or email postcode@afd.co.uk



The Postcode People [your address & data quality partners](#)

Rooting for Success

SUSTAINED GROWTH

Thompson & Morgan, the UK's largest mail order retailer of both seeds and plants, play a key part in stocking our gardens and green spaces. Since 1855 when its first seed catalogue was published, the organisation has been fulfilling its customers' gardening needs. Today, the organisation serves multiple generations of gardeners via published catalogues, a call centre, and an award-winning website.

Synonymous with quality and delivering on high customer expectations, Thompson & Morgan chose AFD Software to provide address validation to both the website and call centre, ensuring their high levels of service improve even further.

CUSTOMER-FOCUSED

Address accuracy for any mail order company is essential, reducing wasted costs of failed deliveries and mailings to incorrect addresses. When the items being delivered are perishable (like living flowers, plants, and trees), this necessity increases further.

Andrew Crees, Group IT Director, also highlights the time-saving element: "Customer calls are valuable, we need the conversation to focus on serving customers rather than on confirming the spelling of addresses. I know from experience living in Wales the pain of placing an order when you must spell out every single part of your address.

When customers enter their delivery details online or over the phone, finding a full address is as simple as entering the postcode to see a list of possible results. When a user only gives part of an address; the house name and street, for example, the solution returns valid addresses that match."

OVERCOMING PERCEIVED BARRIERS

Many organisations view integration and the anticipated amount of work involved as one of the biggest barriers to change when looking at new software implementations.

In response to these concerns, Andrew says: "When rolling out our new enterprise resource planning system, the software developers recommended

AFD as they knew it could seamlessly integrate within our chosen platform. We found this whole process to be very straightforward and AFD plugged in hassle-free."

Integration aside, Thompson & Morgan wanted to ensure that the latest available data was used to validate customer addresses. Andrew continues: "We needed a solution that would be kept up to date. AFD offers frequent data updates to its products helping ensure addresses entered are validated against the latest version of the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF). We never have difficulties finding a customer's address, which is a great benefit."

RECOMMENDATIONS

When asked for the key reasons why Andrew would recommend using AFD, he answers: "From our initial contact, The Postcode People at AFD were on hand to help not only on a technical front but also through pre-sales, demonstrations and trialling the product. We have a working relationship that has always felt like a good fit; working with a company that is there to help and assist rather than fight against our requirements is refreshing."

For a demonstration on how AFD's solutions can be implemented into your systems and deliver fast, accurate address lookup from the most up to date sources, contact Joel Miller on **01624 811711** or email postcode@afd.co.uk

WWW.THOMPSON-MORGAN.COM

Between July and September 2022 there were significant updates to data on PAF. These included 12 new localities; 8,059 new postcodes; 105,862 new delivery points and 19,852 delivery point changes.

Post-code	Double Dependent Locality	Dependent Locality	Post Town
BS24 6		ROLSTONE	WESTON-SUPER-MARE
DD8 1		ORCHARDBANK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	FORFAR
ME1 3		INNOVATION PARK MEDWAY NORTH	ROCHESTER
ME10 1		BORDEN	SITTINGBOURNE
MK43 2		LIDLINGTON	BEDFORD
NE65 8	NORTH END FARM	LONGFRAMLINGTON	MORPETH
PE11 5		WEST PINCHBECK	SPALDING
PE7 4		ALWALTON	PETERBOROUGH
PE7 7		GREAT HADDON	PETERBOROUGH
PE7 8		YAXLEY	PETERBOROUGH
PE7 8		HAMPTON BEACH	PETERBOROUGH
TA1 3		KILLAMS PARK	TAUNTON

The most up-to-date PAF data is available now in our latest Q.4/22 update. You can order updates for any AFD Software solution by calling 01624 811711 or email postcode@afd.co.uk



Laura Kneale

(Finance Administrator)

Bookkeeping and credit control are just a couple of the various tasks that Laura has been involved in as part of the Finance team at AFD Software over the past 3 years.

Laura's working career began with an administration role with a trading company that included some finance-related tasks. After finding these elements were her favourite part of the work she was doing, Laura was glad to join The Postcode People at AFD Software and have a role that focused much more on financial tasks.

Laura also enjoys working for a company that uses its profits to help those in need, with staff nominated charitable donations each year. She has also taken advantage of the AFD Electric vehicle scheme which not only keeps travelling costs down but is helping the environment too.

Outside of work, Laura and her husband are kept busy with their two children and taking their two French bulldogs on walks, enjoying the scenery and calm surroundings the Isle of Man has to offer. When it's holiday time, Laura's family prefer to travel to warmer destinations. Orlando has been the favourite to date but there are many places left on their list to visit.

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