



## Oninit Case Study – A F Carpets

**Client:** A F Carpets

**Key challenge:** To migrate legacy business applications onto a new platform and get the business back up and running after a major hardware failure.



**A F Carpets is a family-run business based in Brigg, Lincolnshire. Established in 1986, the company is a custom roll stockist offering a large product range, including carpets, vinyl, tiles and rugs from its shop and warehouse to domestic customers in and around the area.**

After moving to new premises in 1990, the company recognised the need to implement an electronic solution to manage stock control and the general day-to-day business operations. Explained Mel Harris, Managing Director at A F Carpets: “As a specialist but small carpet business we knew exactly what we wanted our computer system to do. After careful evaluation of the off-the-shelf solutions available at that time, we couldn’t find anything that matched our simple but smart requirements.”

A F Carpets then turned to a small software house based in Nottingham which developed a bespoke solution based on the business requirements. This legacy system used Informix applications, could raise invoices, create purchase orders, generate profit figures, manage stock control and the cutting process.

Mel continued: “As the system was written specifically for our carpet business, it did exactly what we wanted it to do. It was easy to use and, at the time, we didn’t need it to be able to do anything else. Admittedly, over time, the old black and green screen and hardware were looking tired, but through years of use, the application has become part of our integral business environment, our users were familiar with the look and feel of the system, and we saw no need to change – adopting the mantra, if it ain’t broken, don’t fix it!”

“However, as with most computers, the maintenance and support agreement finally expired and we were experiencing a few blips in the system – but switching it off and restarting always seemed to do the trick.”

**“Oninit has revolutionised our business and brought it back to life with enhanced software that is faster, more reliable, easier and cheaper to maintain -- life without Oninit would be truly unbearable!”**

– Mel Harris, Managing Director, A F Carpets

## The worst did happen

October to December represent the busiest months of year for the carpet trade as people look to spruce up their homes in time for Christmas.

“It was a typical Friday afternoon in November 2009, when the system suddenly crashed. No amount of rebooting would bring it back to life and suddenly, we could no longer access invoices or purchase orders, we had no idea how much stock we had left in the warehouse, who owed us money and who we owed money to – and all our customer data was gone. We are a family business with few IT skills between us, so admit we were a little lapse in backing up our data, and now we literally had lost everything.”

“We created a paper system quite quickly,” Mel continued, “but of course this meant we were manually writing all our stock control paper work, which was slow, costly and unprofessional.”

A F Carpets urgently contacted the software house in Nottingham which initially had designed the system over 20 years ago, although it was no longer able to help. However, it did recommend that A F Carpets get in touch with Informix experts, Oninit, as a company that may be able to get the business back up and running.

## Speedy service

Oninit was able to get an Informix expert out to A F Carpets the following Monday morning. Oninit quickly identified that the order processing system had failed due to a catastrophic disk failure which seemed unrecoverable.

The hardware was extremely old, an Acer Altos 7000 single disk system, and had not been upgraded for more than 20 years. The original software house no longer provided support for the legacy software application and the business itself was not that good at performing regular backups – so this massive hardware failure, with corrupt backups, meant that A F Carpets effectively had no computer solution.

Within 24 hours, Oninit was able to patch up the system. Oninit recovered as much of the physical hardware as it could and was able to rebuild 80 percent of the existing database and all of the application code.

## Power of the partnership

Oninit recognises that it is not an expert in every field, but it does know how to get the right people on the right job. Oninit quickly drafted in I2Global, which is an expert in legacy software support, including re-engineering, re-writing and replicating data.

I2Global managed to recover all of the data from the corrupt disk right up until A F Carpets' most recent transaction. The recovered data was then copied into a temporary location and finally dropped back into the system recovered by Oninit in just under 48 hours.

“It was all still pretty precarious,” said Mel, “but within 24 hours the system was up and running again and we were back in business.”



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## Informix – fit for the future

“Of course,” continued Mel, “we knew we needed to invest in a new system. But we’re carpet specialists, not IT experts, and the only thing we knew about our current software was that it ran on Informix – and when it worked, it worked perfectly for us. So obviously, we were reluctant to change and wanted to continue to use the existing software application, as we all understood it and it was able to do exactly what we wanted.”

I2Global went on to work with Oninit to install and configure a new network, hardware and server, which would enable all of A F Carpets’ team to access the software.

A F Carpets was ported to a new Linux server platform and Informix database environment which is now fully supported. Oninit also made some recommendations to modernise the existing application running on older installations.

Within three weeks, A F Carpets was properly up and running on the new system – which effectively also included new functional enhancements to the existing application which it had so longed to keep.

## Business revolution

“Oninit was able to retrieve the data from the old application neatly and with minimal disruption to our working day. It went on to look at the existing application and recommended some enhancements, so we are now able to revisit old invoices, add in fitting dates and delete stock which we could never do with the original legacy solution,” said Mel.

“Oninit has revolutionised our business and brought it back to life. We now have a PC on every desk, with email and internet access. Oninit has brought us into the 21st century with enhanced software that is faster, more reliable, easier and cheaper to maintain - and as a business, A F Carpets is so much more efficient – life without Oninit would be truly unbearable!”

## About Oninit

Oninit was founded in 1999 as a specialist Informix developer and consulting team, and since that time has grown into a leading Informix services company providing a range of Informix database and application development, support and training services to companies in the UK and across EMEA from its base in Cirencester, UK.

Informix is deeply embedded in the enterprise IT systems of many thousands of companies worldwide. Oninit provides the vital Informix technical support and development services which are required by these complex systems.

Oninit helps companies to develop new Informix applications as well as support, enhance, integrate and modernise applications running on older installations. It works with customers to upgrade and modernise these to take maximum advantage of the latest Informix technical enhancements and additions, ensuring a roadmap for their future IT or establishing an evolutionary path to more modern open or virtualised architectures.

**More information can be found at [www.oninitgroup.com](http://www.oninitgroup.com)**



## About A F Carpets

A F Carpets is a family-run business based in Brigg, Lincolnshire. Established in 1986, the company is a custom roll stockist offering a large product range, including carpets, vinyl, tiles and rugs from its shop and warehouse to domestic and commercial customers in and around the area.

With many years of experience, the carpet and flooring specialist is committed to the highest levels of service and installation. It offers a home delivery sample service where all of its products can be purchased on line.

**For more information, please visit [www.afcarpets.co.uk](http://www.afcarpets.co.uk)**



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