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**Fletcher
Building**

From Manual to Modern

From Manual to Modern: How Fletcher Building

For a construction giant like Fletcher Building, delivering materials to thousands of job sites across New Zealand is a massive logistical challenge. While simple, high-volume orders are easily handled by automated systems, the building industry is known for "special" orders that often require a person to enter the details manually.

For Jamie Thomson, Head of IT for the Laminex New Zealand, Comfortech, and Winstone Wallboards business units, the goal was to automate these complicated orders without the high cost and rigid rules of typical corporate software. By partnering with Xtracta, Fletcher Building successfully modernised its sales order workflow, achieving a dramatic 75% reduction in average order entry time and bridging the gap between legacy systems and the demands of modern site logistics.

The "Special Request" Hurdle

In the world of building supplies, not every order is a simple list of parts. While big retail chains use automated links for bulk stock, a large portion of Fletcher Building's work involves sending supplies directly to a building site with very specific needs.

At Winstone Wallboards, for instance, builders often send orders that include detailed delivery instructions. As Jamie Thomson explains:

"With our direct-to-site service, a builder might need a specific sequence of products stacked a certain way or carried into a bathroom. Those highly specific requests simply don't lend themselves to a standard digital order type."

In the past, these custom requests arrived via email as various document types or spreadsheets in dozens of different layouts. Manually entering this data was slow and error-prone, risking delivery delays that could bring a construction project to a standstill. Making things harder was that the company's older accounting and management software wasn't designed to integrate easily with modern data-reading tools.

A Flexible, Local Alternative

When searching for a fix, Thomson looked at enterprise, "one-size-fits-all" software used by larger business units within Fletchers. However, he found that these massive platforms weren't the right fit for local needs or budgets.

Seeking a more agile option, Thomson turned to Xtracta, a New Zealand-based technology company. Testing proved the technology could handle complex sales orders, offering the flexibility to adapt to the unique ways builders place orders.

The goal was to make the new system as "hands-off" as possible for the staff. Instead of a complicated manual process, Fletcher Building built a digital bridge between Xtracta and its existing office software. This setup allowed the two systems to communicate automatically—sending relevant data to Xtracta for checking and pulling verified order details back out. By doing this, they hide the complexity in the background, making the new technology feel like a natural, built-in part of the tools the team already uses.

Speed, Accuracy, and Control

The primary win for Fletcher Building has been a staggering increase in processing speed without losing the accuracy needed for tricky site deliveries. At Winstone Wallboards, the average order entry time has plummeted from eight minutes to just two minutes. Customer responsiveness has seen an even more dramatic shift; at Laminex, the time to send an order confirmation has dropped from 30 minutes to a mere 90 seconds.

By automating the "non-standard" orders that older systems couldn't touch, the business units have significantly lightened the load on customer service staff. This has freed up the equivalent of two full-time employees across the team, allowing them to focus on higher-value tasks like managing customer queries and processing credits. Additionally, this partnership gave the internal team a level of control they didn't have before, leading to a faster setup and a price that actually made sense for the size of the business.

Beyond the internal gains, the ripple effect on Fletcher Building's construction customers has been equally significant. Builders on-site now receive order confirmations in near real-time, providing them with the certainty they need to coordinate labour and site logistics. Because Xtracta can accurately parse complex delivery instructions—such as specific product stacking sequences or room-by-room placement—customers are seeing greater precision in their deliveries. Critically, this automation has been achieved without forcing customers to change their own internal processes; they can continue to send orders in whatever format their business uses, while Fletcher Building provides the speed and accuracy of a fully digital experience.

A Blueprint for Success

The success of the Xtracta implementation at Winstone Wallboards and Laminex has created a blueprint for other business units within the Fletcher Building group. By choosing a flexible, AI-driven partner over a rigid enterprise legacy, Thomson has demonstrated that business units can achieve high-level automation while maintaining control over their own processes.



"I'm not saying it wouldn't have been capable of doing what we wanted to do, but it comes with an enterprise-sized price tag."

"I would recommend Xtracta to others. And my businesses would recommend it to others because of the benefits that we've seen. It works"

Jamie Thomson

Head of IT for the Laminex New Zealand, Comfortech, and Winstone Wallboards business units,