

## Dialog Dual Keeps Grattan's Logistics Moving During Power Failures



**S**upply chain logistics is a highly competitive business ruled by stringent service level agreements (SLAs) between provider and customer. Next-day delivery is now standard offering and third-party logistics providers, like Grattan, cannot afford for their facilities to be disrupted by power cuts.

Not only are they honouring their promise to their customers but their customers' customers as well. There are always hungry competitors waiting to snatch business from anyone unfortunate enough to slip up.

### Strategic Manoeuvre - Third Party Logistics

For a catalogue and home shopping business like Grattan, third-party logistics provision is a strategic manoeuvre to sustain business growth in an otherwise declining market. In Grattan's case, running a fleet of 500 vans and 100 large 'trunkers' (lorries).

The late 1990s saw a drop in trade provoke a rash of consolidation in the catalogue and home shopping market. Grattan's German parent company, Otto Versand, acquired London-based Freeman in 1999 giving it greater global purchasing power, a larger market share and a major distribution facility in Peterborough, England. The company also invested in a call centre in Bradford, West Yorkshire, initiated 24-hour delivery and forged a link with Tesco, thus creating extra jobs and a more profitable business.

The logistics operation is built on a cast-iron reputation for getting it right first time, which in turn relies on real-time information and continuous uptime from supply chain, data, communications systems and warehouse operations. Reliance on a source of uninterrupted power is paramount, which is why the company recently installed 3.3kVA Riello Dialog Dual UPS at its 14 UK-wide distribution depots. Each one protects crucial file servers, voice and data networks, communication cabinets and telephone switches that are vital for the successful running of Grattan's logistics business.

### Up To 18,000 Items Handled Per Day

The company manages 13,000-18,000 items per day. Firstly, in-bound: goods are delivered to the various distribution centres around the UK, itemised and logged into stock control and warehousing systems before being prepared for their out-bound journey. This entails sorting, picking, packing and despatch to households, businesses and other third-party logistics providers around the UK – all in less than 24 hours! In-bound deliveries can occur at all hours of the day and night (sometimes as late as 4am!) so there is little room for error or system downtime. In accordance with SLAs, most deliveries are next day and concluded by 11am.



*The Dialog Dual 3.3kVA With Extended Battery Runtime*

Frank Poulton, technical infrastructure project leader, Grattan, reiterates how tightly the business operates: "What we're trying to do now is more third-party work for customers such as Tesco, Debenhams and Next. Their home delivery business is growing but as a supplier it's a tough market and there is no room for complacency." Poulton continues: "We have a successful offering and are well placed to cope with the pressure. We already have the infrastructure to handle both volume and the speed of delivery our customers need to honour guarantees to their customers. Often, we can do it more efficiently than they can themselves but we have learned to our cost that we need business continuity and power protection."

### Power Failures Brought Depots To A Standstill

Prior to the new installation, there were no uninterruptible power supplies in place and power failures or problems frequently resulted in disruption and the potential for data loss or corruption. In a business that thrives on accurate and timely customer information, disruption could easily lead to mistakes – costly both financially and in terms of reputation. Says Poulton: "Power failures could bring the depot to a standstill, and that's an outcome neither we nor our customers can tolerate in today's highly competitive environments. Since installation of the UPS, we still suffer power problems – including cuts - but we hardly feel the effects as we have two hours of extended runtime protection."

### Why Dialog Dual ?

Dialog Dual is a double-conversion on-line UPS and powers the load continuously with a break-free supply. The double-conversion process eliminates sags, surges and brownouts and additional EMI filters help protect the UPS and load from spikes, electrical noise and transients.

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In the event of a mains power failure, the inverter, which is continuously powering the load, draws an electrical current from the internal battery to provide complete protection.

## Extended Runtime Provision

In Grattan's case, the additional installation of 14A/h battery extension cabinets that connect to each UPS provide up to 122 minutes of extended runtime. This is enough to traverse most power failures without having to shut down the network and thus bring the distribution facility to a standstill. In the unlikely event that a power failure extends beyond that time, PowerShield<sup>2</sup> software (supplied as standard) enables systems to be shutdown in a controlled and orderly manner, thus negating the potential for damage, data loss or corruption.



*Grattan Catalogues On The Move From One Of The Key Depots*

## Customer Satisfaction and Reputation Protected

In what is arguably one of the most competitive business sectors of our time, with help from Riello UPS, Grattan is powered up to ensure customer satisfaction and its reputation stay in tact and that its business can continue to thrive.



TEC is a specialist consulting team within each Riello UPS company that provides project management, design and installation advise for both standard and bespoke Riello UPS designs. Each TEC member is appointed based on their engineering background and experience within the power protection field.

For more information:  
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