



**“Accredo has helped us grow but provided improved efficiencies along the way, allowing us to maintain a small tight knit team.”**

Margaret Ware, General Manager, Far North Fuels (on right) with John Pronk of Blue Sky Systems.

## Accredo fuels improved automation and reporting for growing Kerikeri firm

**Eighteen months after moving to the Accredo business accounting platform, fuel card provider Far North Fuels is revelling in the faster reporting, improved automation and labour saving efficiencies it has gained.**

General Manager, Margaret Ware, believes the switch to Accredo also helped the company win the Supreme Award in the Westpac Northland Business Excellence competition last year. “The efficiencies we gained from our improved use of IT definitely contributed to our success.”

Established just over 10 years ago, Far North Fuels is a growing New Zealand owned and operated business. The Kerikeri based company, which provides Mobil fuel cards to car and truck drivers, started with just 700 customers.

“Thanks to some reasonably aggressive marketing and advertising, we have built up the customer base to somewhere between 20 and 30 thousand,” Ware says. “We offer Mobil and Caltex cards and have recently formed a new partnership with BP.”

The fuel card allows holders to purchase discounted petrol and diesel from over 900 different service stations and truck stops around New Zealand. “We are popular with fleet car operators and trucking companies, but have a large number of retail customers as well,” says Ware.

Business expansion is often accompanied by growing pains and in mid 2012 Far North Fuels was struggling to execute some of its core business processes in a timely fashion.

“We faced a log jam at the end of each month. We were using MYOB and with the growth of our customer base the software was grinding to a halt when it came to emailing out statement and invoices.”

Ware says the company had made conscious efforts to go paperless and had urged its customers to transact electronically.

“Unfortunately we were struggling to issue our own electronic communications. We couldn't push all

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the statements and invoices out in one hit and had to resort to doing them in batches. And that would end up taking us several days to complete. The database simply didn't have enough firepower to get the job done."

The legacy software was problematic in other ways. "We had to issue separate invoices and statements with MYOB, so everyone was getting two pieces of paper which wasn't ideal and we couldn't import receipts properly."

After deciding to look for a new solution, Ware researched and came up with a number of possible alternatives. "I talked to our accountants and arranged for several different software representatives to come and see me."

Ware was visited by Accredo reseller John Pronk of Blue Sky Systems and says she was impressed by the way he immediately understood the business.

"The others didn't really get what we needed in an accounting package, but John had already set up a company

similar to ours on Accredo down in Whangarei. He instinctively knew what we were looking for and knew that Accredo would provide a good match for our operations."

After talking to a couple of other Accredo customers, Ware was reassured that Accredo was the right system to implement. "The people I spoke to were very impressed with its processing power and reporting capabilities."

Following a straightforward data migration to the new platform Far North Fuels' most immediate gain from the switch to Accredo was the ability to send out all its customer invoices with just one click, says Ware.

"Added to that we now send only one document that combines the statement and the invoice on one sheet."

She says printing reports, which used to take an hour or longer with MYOB, are now done instantly. "The system is a lot faster and it has made us more efficient."

"I particularly like the way it can be customised. If we want something to work slightly differently to better match how we operate, I simply ask John to write a script and it's done."

All Far North Fuel's card transactions are captured on a piece of software called Card Manager. That data is extracted and exported into Accredo which has been set up to produce every downstream action at the touch of a button.

"Accredo sends out the invoices/statements, then creates all the files for the bank direct debits and at the same time creates the receipts for those direct debits. It is one touch processing that has saved us a tremendous amount of time and effort."

Prior to this automation, Ware says everything had to be done manually. "When you have around 40,000 fuel cards in operation, that can create a lot of headaches."

Accredo also handles the card fees and enables overdue interest to be calculated and added to the invoice. "We used to have to do this on a separate spreadsheet and manually put it against every overdue customer," says Ware.

The reporting power available with Accredo has also impressed Ware. Far North Fuels has customised its P&L sheet to record revenues and expenses separately against each of its different cards in order to see the margins on each of them. "The Accredo management reports are simple to read. When I first took them to our board meeting, the members were blown away because they were so easy to read – all the key information was present and available on one page."

The efficiencies and automation that Far North Fuels has derived from Accredo have meant that despite its strong growth it has not had to employ extra staff. "That was one of our key objectives. We wanted to maintain a small tight knit team. We employ a full-time IT person because we are serious about using technology to help us work smarter. Accredo is an essential part of that philosophy and has helped us down that path considerably."

**"Accredo is faster than our previous system and I like how it can be tailored to match the way we operate."**

Margaret Ware,  
General Manager,  
Far North Fuels