INGENUITY
A THG COMPANY

THG Ingenuity

Enterprise e-commerce
brand succeeds with Zoho One

The Company

> **We power global ecommerce icons to sell more, reach further, and grow faster.**

THG Ingenuity is an e-commerce solution provider headquartered in Manchester, UK, that helps brands scale and succeed. Through its three divisions - THG Commerce, THG Studios, and THG Fulfil - it offers end-to-end e-commerce services, from marketing and strategy to delivery and courier management.

THG Commerce delivers profitable, long-term growth for retailers by enhancing brand experience and driving commercial success. THG Studios is an award-winning creative agency that boasts one of the largest creative studios in Europe. And THG Fulfil operates a world-class fulfilment centre spanning 780,000 sq ft, housing 380 state-of-the-art robots and over 1.1 million SKU locations. Processing up to 1 million outbound units daily through 250+ courier integrations, THG Fulfil services 195 global destinations.

With over 20 years of experience in the e-commerce sector, THG Ingenuity is trusted by leading brands including The Range, Holland and Barrett, MyProtein, LOOKFANTASTIC and Cult Beauty. "We leverage our global reach, technological innovation, and customer-centric approach to deliver profitable results that drive long-term brand growth," explains Mishje Cooper, THG Ingenuity's Director of Systems and Tooling.

We caught up with the team at THG Ingenuity to discover how the e-commerce giant uses an extensive array of tools from the Zoho One suite to manage its sales and support functions, orchestrate client projects, deliver business intelligence, log employee timesheets, manage events, and more.
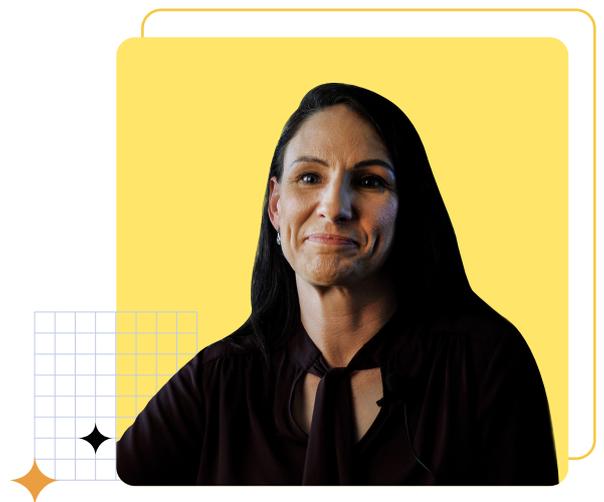
The Challenge

Replace fragmented spreadsheets with a connected, cross-functional platform

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The first project I was tasked with was to create an end-to-end process using Zoho.

Mishje Cooper,
Director of Systems and Tooling

When Mishje joined THG Ingenuity in 2021, she became responsible for Zoho's presence across the business. At the time, Zoho CRM was being used in a limited capacity by its sales team, but it was the only Zoho application in its software stack. Other teams were juggling a plethora of Excel spreadsheets or PowerPoint presentations, leading to data duplication, poor visibility of business metrics, and siloed operations.

Quickly seeing the transformational potential of Zoho, Mishje rolled out the Zoho One suite, a bundle of 45+ integrated applications that support almost every business requirement. "Now we use Zoho so extensively across the business; for marketing, sales, project management and more," she smiles. "We currently utilise more than 20 of the applications in the bundle." Today, Mishje oversees a dedicated team of colleagues who streamline and refine Zoho's use across every role and department.

Reflecting on the start of her Zoho journey, Mishje reveals that her non-negotiables were:

- A platform that was user-friendly, intuitive and easy to navigate.

- Natively integrated applications that talked to one another.

- Flexible, highly customisable workflows that could mirror THG Ingenuity's processes.

- A single software vendor that was easy to deal with.

- Future-proofed longevity from a platform that offered room to grow.

- A value-driven solution that delivered strong ROI.

- A skilled implementation partner for technical builds and custom functions.

Mishje clearly saw that the Zoho One suite ticked all her boxes. She immediately set about expanding its use across the business, aided by DSL Telecom, a Zoho Premium partner based in her home country of South Africa.
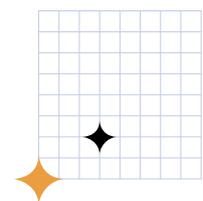
The Solution

Zoho One solves endless business challenges in one connected ecosystem

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Now that Zoho is fully integrated into our processes, driven from the top down, everyone has seen the value of it... **It allows us to join all the dots in the business.**

Mishje Cooper,
Director of Systems and Tooling

Mishje is the super administrator of THG Ingenuity's Zoho environment. She oversees the management of all its applications, roles, permissions, and privileges across more than 600 licenses company-wide. She reports that it is easy to onboard new joiners, roll out new tools and extensions, and toggle functions on and off.

Having more than 45 applications available at her fingertips also simplifies the day-to-day operations in a large enterprise, removing the red tape and approval cycles typically required to launch a new tool. "With Zoho One, we already have the app. We just need to switch it on and start using it," beams Mishje. There's no market research phase, and no complex tender processes; just a ready-made solution waiting to be leveraged. "There's always an application available for the problem I need to solve," she adds.

For Mishje, it's also Zoho One's malleability that cements its place in THG Ingenuity's tech stack. Because the company's processes are not linear, but are niche and complex, it was critical that Zoho could be moulded to match. "Zoho, with some development and customisation, can mirror our processes," she smiles.

Reflecting on the overall impact of Zoho One, Mishje remains resolute in her decision to upgrade from Zoho CRM alone. "I believe it's one of the best software bundles available on the market. Its strengths sit in its full suite of applications, flexibility, and its seamless integrations. The cost factor is another big reason why any business should consider Zoho One. I realised very quickly that it offers great value."

Zoho CRM

Today, Zoho CRM is still a staple application, used extensively by THG Ingenuity's sales, account management, and marketing teams. It captures incoming leads, stores client details, holds contracts, tracks deals, and records products and services. "It's a system which can hold all our data, that we can report from, and that provides a single source of truth," explains Natalie Jones, Head of Systems and Processes.

As part of its lead generation efforts, THG Ingenuity's marketing team uses Zoho Forms to place enquiry forms on the firm's website. A seamless integration with Zoho CRM pushes completed forms into the Leads module, where the marketing team can qualify them. Smoothing the process further, the team uses Zoho CRM to filter out junk leads, ensuring resources are spent on those that promise better returns. "CRM automations we have built disqualify any leads that are not applicable for our products and services," confirms Natalie.

By utilising Zoho CRM to orchestrate the process from enquiry to sale, THG's marketing team have gained complete visibility of the customer journey and the sources that drive the most conversions. "We can see all the touchpoints a lead has been through, and at each month-end, easily report on how many MQLs were brought in, and how many were converted to SQLs," Natalie adds.

Those SQLs are nurtured efficiently by THG Ingenuity's sales team inside the CRM, leveraging multiple modules, pipelines and workflows. Andrea Marks, Head of Revenue Operations, explains, "We use Leads, Accounts, Contacts, Deals, and Product modules for our sales and client processes. We have also built our own custom modules, such as the "Contract" module."

When the sales team needs the assistance of other departments, like finance, legal, or project management, a number of helpful automations come into play. "We have set up numerous notifications from the CRM for different deal stages; for instance, when a deal reaches a specific stage, an email alerts our colleagues to do a reference check, or to engage another team that needs to start working on a part of the deal. Reminders also ensure they have completed all the necessary steps to progress the project, too," says Andrea.

CRM workflows also engage other Zoho products to jump into action at specified points of the sales process. "As soon as a deal is confirmed as 'won', it activates a blueprint in the back-end of Zoho CRM which automatically triggers a site creation, and a project creation in Zoho Projects," Andrea continues.

Perhaps the biggest benefit that Zoho CRM has brought to THG Ingenuity is reporting. Previously managed via Excel spreadsheets, the upgrade to a live reporting system has had far-reaching advantages. "Our reporting was accurate, but it was manual and a lengthy process to compile, and it was hard to get real-time updates," recalls Natalie. "Yes, CRM reports are a really good feature," nods Andrea. With many internal teams servicing thousands of clients across fast-moving, time-critical projects, Zoho CRM provides THG Ingenuity with the reliable, highly visible data it needs at the click of a button.


Rebecca Sharp, THG Ingenuity's Operational Excellence Manager, credits Zoho Desk with optimising the firm's customer support operations. The ticketing platform allows its team to efficiently triage and respond to support requests, meet SLAs, and deliver outstanding customer service.

> **"** With thousands of tickets submitted per month, having Desk has allowed us to get tickets logged in a structured way so that **we can pull insightful data and drive continuous improvement, always with the client at the heart.**

Rebecca Sharp,
Operational Excellence Manager
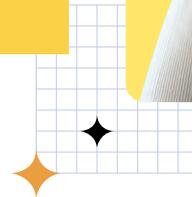
THG Ingenuity also utilises Desk's customer-facing portal, giving their clients a simple way to log in, raise requests with various departments, and view their full ticket history. This self-service approach is extended further through an integration with Zoho SalesIQ. A SalesIQ chatbot is hosted on THG Ingenuity's website, allowing visitors to raise support tickets even outside of normal business hours. "Customer services use this to give an enhanced experience to clients whilst the business is closed," explains Rebecca. Any tickets raised are automatically routed into Desk, ready to be picked up and actioned during opening hours - ensuring customers get timely support without disruption or delay.

Elsewhere, Zoho Desk syncs directly with Zoho CRM, meaning that all the tickets a client raises are visible against their account record for the sales and account management teams to see. This integration helps colleagues stay informed of any issues and enables contextualised discussions and meetings. "The integration with Zoho CRM is really great for our teams that don't work in support but still need visibility of what tickets have been raised," says Rebecca.

Finally, Zoho Desk has been connected to ServiceDesk Plus (SDP), an ITSM tool from ManageEngine. Used by THG Ingenuity's engineering teams, SDP tracks service, change management, and incident management requests. "Our support and engineering teams can pick up those requests that are mapped into their specific queues. Updates push back and forth between the systems, ensuring our clients and support teams always have the latest information on the tickets," Rebecca reveals.

Zoho Projects

Most of THG Ingenuity's services involve multiple deliverables over extended timeframes, such as content and website production, product listing, order processing systems, warehousing infrastructure, and more. To manage these, the business implemented Zoho Projects, a sophisticated project management tool.

Zoho Projects is connected to Zoho CRM, so that when a deal is won, a new project creation is automatically triggered. The team have built a number of project templates with pre-populated elements to streamline the delivery process. "If it's a master site or an international site, or a fulfilment project, they'll have different tasks, milestones, and criteria. The templates are predefined and are chosen by an automation based on the project type," explains Natalie. "This gives the project manager a ready-made structure, with a timeline and embedded links to documents that help colleagues to follow its progress," she adds.
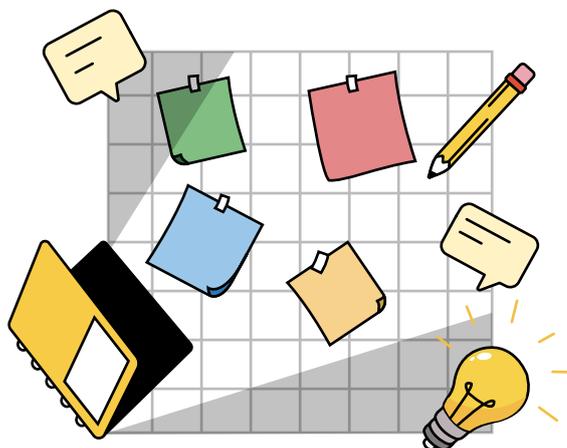
Automated notifications also help keep the project moving. When certain tasks are marked as complete, colleagues assigned to the subsequent task are alerted, so they know that their input is required. Meanwhile, a "go live" checklist function allows the project manager to push out a report to each internal stakeholder, containing notes and the real-time status of the project for complete visibility of its progress.

It's not just THG Ingenuity's colleagues that Zoho Project keeps in the loop. The team can generate customer-facing reports that clearly visualise all the stages of the project's scope and the progress that has been made against them. "These can be emailed to our clients, giving them visibility of the project roadmap and where we are up to," Natalie explains.

Prior to using Zoho Projects, the team logged all their activity in numerous Excel spreadsheets and presented progress to their clients in PowerPoint presentations. This made for a disjointed user experience and poor visibility of the completed workload and any arising issues.

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Now we can get much deeper insights, for instance, the average amount of time a project takes, where blockages occur, and how many projects are overdue. **We could not generate this type of information before using just Excel sheets!**

Natalie Jones,
Head of Systems and Processes
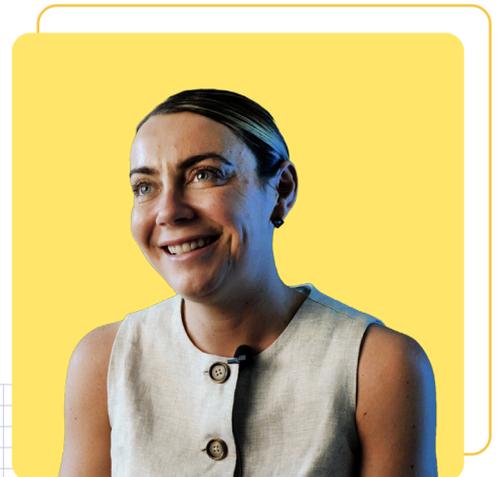
Zoho Sign

To obtain e-signatures on important documents such as contracts and onboarding agreements, THG Ingenuity employ Zoho Sign. "We use Sign for internal approval workflows whilst also using it externally to obtain client signatures on official documents," shares Rebecca.

Zoho Sign is integrated with Zoho CRM, enabling the sales team to easily push contracts for won deals out to clients in a few clicks, prepopulated with all the particulars of the deal. It's also integrated with Zoho Flow, which connects its functionality to many of THG Ingenuity's approval processes. And importantly, it's also plugged into Zoho Workdrive, meaning that all signed documents are automatically stored according to THG's file management protocols and are easily retrievable by the colleagues that need them.

Overall, Zoho Sign enables a low-friction route to secure approvals, ensure compliance, and track important paperwork. "The automated workflows are particularly useful to reduce the manual effort for our teams and speed up our processes, leaving them to focus on their key tasks," nods Rebecca.

Zoho Backstage
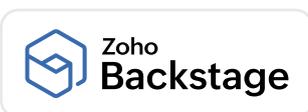
THG Ingenuity's marketing department runs a packed calendar of in-person and virtual events each year, including networking sessions, warehouse and studio tours, meetings, and tech and fulfilment events. To organise and promote these events, the team leverages Zoho Backstage, a powerful, end-to-end event management platform.

Backstage empowers THG Ingenuity to easily build custom-branded webpages to advertise events, sell tickets, check attendees in, push out announcements, and run post-event reports. "We use many of Backstage's features, from ticketing to badge scanning, speaker profiles, and its microsite landing pages," reveals Natalie. "We have now hosted more than 30 Backstage events in the UK and overseas, ranging from in-person events to webinars and OnAir."

Alongside Backstage, THG Ingenuity uses Zoho Marketing Automation as a promotional pre- and post-event tool. Engaging email journeys are crafted to invite targeted audiences to each upcoming event, containing links to the relevant Backstage microsite. Then, after each event, any leads are also synced back to Zoho Marketing Automation, where "they enter into targeted email journeys based on criteria, such as the event they attended, or their industry," shares Natalie.

Zoho CRM is also a key part of the event toolkit, as attendee data is passed from Backstage into the applicable contact record. "We push all the event data to Zoho CRM to measure the engagement of those attendees…and for touchpoint tracking," Natalie adds.

Before finding Zoho One, THG ingenuity used to track the working hours of all its employees using a third-party platform, but found it cumbersome and rigid. "The previous system was time-consuming, and did not have the flexible reporting requirements we needed," recalls Natalie.

Turning to the experts at DSL Telecom, THG Ingenuity's Zoho implementation partner, Natalie tasked them to build a custom solution that would offer a better fit for THG Ingenuity's diverse working patterns. "The app needed to be user-friendly so our users could easily input their work hours, but also it had to be laser-accurate for finance's reporting purposes," she explains. DSL Telecom understood the assignment. Using Zoho Creator's Low-code platform, they crafted a bespoke time-tracker app, which the entirety of THG Ingenuity's workforce now uses.

Employees simply enter the hours they have worked into the Creator app, either daily or in bulk. They can associate hours to client projects, specific admin tasks, or particular activity types, and they can also record their holidays and absences. "It allows us to be really specific about what we log time for…with the Creator interface, it's very intuitive and quick for our staff to use," smiles Natalie.

To avoid errors, DSL Telecom built safeguards into the back-end of the app. For instance, a cut-off time limit was implemented, which prevents employees from amending time sheets once THG Ingenuity's finance team has approved them. Managers are also able to log timesheets on behalf of their direct reports if they are absent, to prevent missing data in reports. Automated reminders offer a final fail-safe. "Email reminders are sent out on a weekly basis, asking people who haven't already done so to log their time, and their line manager is automatically copied in. In the past, we had to manually chase these individuals, so the app has been a really big time-saver for finance," reveals Natalie.

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We really love the time tracker app and the way we've been able to develop it for our unique needs. **It's completely customised to our business and works exactly the way we need it to.**

Natalie Jones,
Head of Systems and Processes
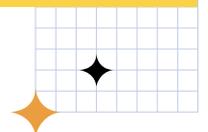
Zoho Analytics

Sitting across THG Ingenuity's entire Zoho environment is Zoho Analytics. The BI application combines data from each tool and creates comprehensive reports that provide a big picture view of the business. Today, THG Ingenuity processes over 50 million rows of data across 17 different workspaces inside Zoho Analytics and has built hundreds of different visualisation dashboards for various purposes.

The team can slice and dice data in endless ways and combine different data sources to identify trends, patterns, or anomalies that help to drive business decisions. "We have created countless reports and dashboards to aid pipeline management and for our CEO and Chairperson to view. It's become a critical part of our reporting cadence, and it's used all over the business in weekly meetings and to send to C-Suite," declares Andrea.

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As we are so happy with Analytics, we have now invested in a developer to help us build and manage even more reports.

Andrea Marks,
Head of Revenue Operations
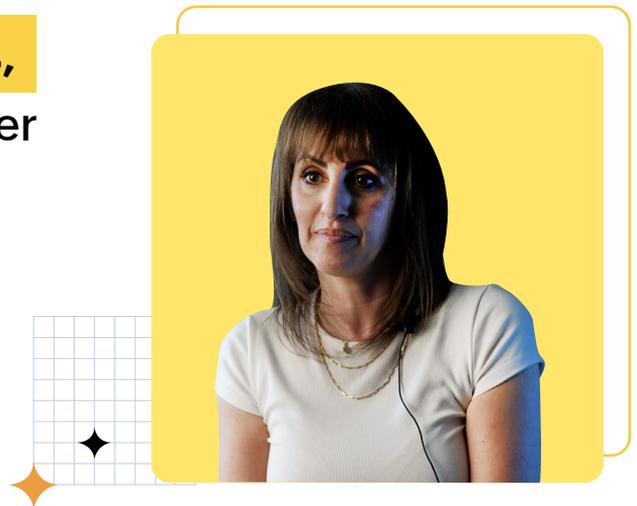
THG Ingenuity extensively uses Zoho Flow to forge bespoke integrations between applications and automate actions. "We have built over 60 live flows using an average of 42,000 tasks per week. It's helping us automate our processes, integrate apps, and send notifications. These range from webforms, marketing, projects and CRM syncs, to integrations with third-party apps and automatically updating data. Flow almost connects anything!" exclaims Natalie.

Zoho Flow has a noteworthy role in the firm's Zoho Desk setup, whereby it routes tickets to multiple required locations. "It automates and then passes client-raised tickets through a lot of work-streams, departments and other third-party software," Natalie explains. "Also, we need to transfer media files between Desk and ServiceDesk Plus (SDP), so we do this using Zoho Flow. Recently, Zoho increased the file size limit exclusively for us to accommodate the large video and media files we need."

Looking to the future

Zoho One has had transformative results for THG Ingenuity's customer-facing and internal processes, boosting efficiency, productivity, collaboration, and ROI. But Mishje doesn't rest on her laurels. Alongside DSL Telecom, whom she calls "instrumental", and her Zoho key account manager, Matt Roberts, whom she dubs "wonderful", Mishje strives for continuous improvement. "I want to start exploring some of Zoho's AI capabilities and see how Zia, the embedded AI assistant, can help us," she says. As for other forward-thinking businesses looking to grow and improve? Well, Mishje always points them in the direction of Zoho without hesitation!
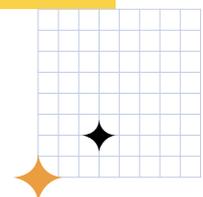
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I would absolutely recommend Zoho to any business.
I sing its praises so highly!

Mishje Cooper,
Director of Systems and Tooling

About DSL Telecom

Established in 2009, DSL Telecom is a Zoho Premium partner based in South Africa. Its team boasts decades of industry experience, backed by a deep commitment to service excellence. Whether it's connectivity, cloud software, or business communications, DSL helps companies do more with solutions that grow with them.

To learn more about DSL Telecom, visit: **www.dsltelecom.co.za**

About Zoho One
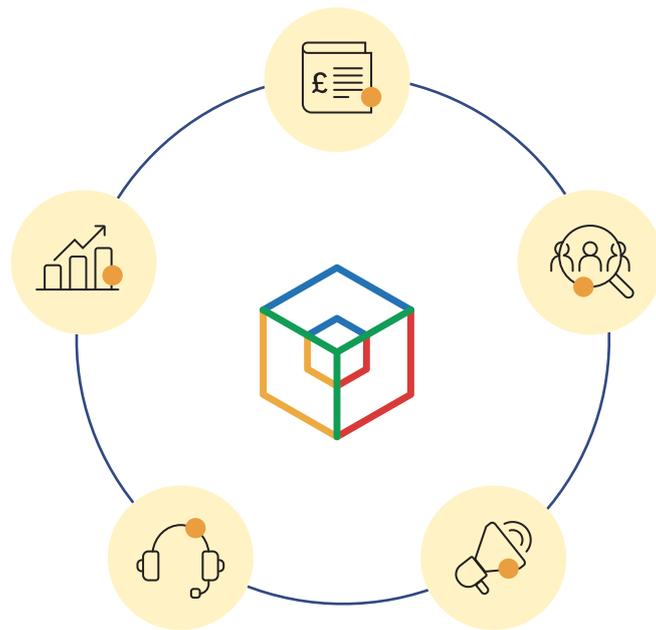
Developed as the ultimate "operating system for business", the Zoho One bundle is a collection of 45+ integrated applications that cater to every diverse need of a modern business. From Sales to Marketing, Customer Support, HR, Operations, Finance, and Legal, Zoho One's powerful suite of tools can be relied upon by every department to improve performance, enhance collaboration, and streamline processes. An unrivalled yet affordable solution, Zoho One's cloud-based apps bring extraordinary value to any organisation.

Please find out more via our website: www.zoho.com/one/

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