WEGOTRADE

THE 2026 PLAYBOOK FOR CANADIAN DAIRY DISTRIBUTORS

Reclaim a Full Employee.

Automate orders, deliveries, invoicing, and payments - purpose-built for Canadian dairy distributors. Documented savings. 90-day path to go live.

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New to DSD, ERP, or order-to-cash? Start with the Executive Summary →

SECTION 1

Executive Summary

Canadian dairy distributors are running their businesses on manual processes built for past decades. The phone calls to remind customers to reorder. The driver paperwork. The A/R chase. The double entry into QuickBooks, SAGE, SAP, or Acomba - not because those systems are wrong, but because nothing connects them to the order flow. The work gets done. It just costs a full-time employee to do it.

This playbook shows what that hidden cost actually looks like, where it hides, and how to remove it. The numbers come from a real cost-benefit study conducted last year with a Quebec independent dairy distributor, anonymized for publication. The math is conservative, the savings are documented, and the path to capturing them is 90 days, not 90 months.

0.89 FTE RECLAIMED	**1,494** HOURS RECOVERED ANNUALLY
4 to 8 mo TYPICAL PAYBACK	**90 days** TO GO LIVE

FTE = Full-Time Equivalent - one employee working approximately 1,680 hours per year.

This platform isn't an ERP replacement. It's the order-to-cash layer that sits on top of what you already have. Four stages - Order, Delivery and Billing, Payment, Receivables - each independently deployable, each measurably valuable, all connected to your ERP and to each other when you're ready to compound them.

> **Order-to-cash:** the full business cycle from the moment a customer places an order to the moment payment is received and posted in your accounting system - including order processing, delivery, invoicing, and accounts receivable.

Who this is for

→ Owner-operators of Canadian dairy distribution businesses, $5-200M revenue.

→ Sales leaders and GMs spending 1+ hours a day on order administration.

→ Anyone wanting to offer a better customer experience and optimize their B2B business processes.

SECTION 2

The 2026 Reality for Dairy Owners

Four pressures are squeezing Canadian dairy distributors at the same time. None of them are going away in 2026, and none of them get easier by waiting.

Labour Shortage & Wage Inflation

Wages in distribution and warehousing grew 5.8% last year - faster than inflation, faster than most other sectors.[1] If your admin costs you $59,000 loaded, that's $3,400 more than last year for the exact same work. It will compound again next year. And the year after that.

Retailer Digital Expectations

Your buyers - whether it's a Sobeys, a local grocery store, a restaurant group, or a school cafeteria - increasingly expect to order on their own schedule, without picking up the phone. Manual order intake by email or phone call is friction they feel every week. The distributors winning new accounts are the ones who make it simple to buy from them.

Margin Compression

Fuel is up. Supplier prices are up. Your drivers cost more than they did two years ago. Every dollar of margin you can't recover at the top line has to come from somewhere inside the operation. The only costs you actually control are the ones built on manual process - and those compound quietly, year over year, until someone adds them up.

Leadership Time Scarcity

Most Canadian dairy distributors at the $5-200M scale are still tightly managed at the top. Whether it's the owner reconciling invoices at night or a director of operations fielding exception calls all day, the same pattern holds: management time is being consumed by operational noise that should never reach their desk. That's the cost the math rarely captures - and the one leadership feels most.

SECTION 3

Where 1,851 Hours Hide Every Year

Last year, we ran a documented cost-benefit study with a Quebec independent dairy distributor - roughly 430 orders per month, $3.9M in revenue, running QuickBooks Online, with one to two DSD (Direct Store Delivery) trucks.[2] The study captured the manual time spent on every recurring operational task. Here's what the year looked like before automation.

TASK	TIME / ORDER	HOURS / YEAR	ANNUAL COST
Order creation	8 min	688 h	$24,163
Delivery adjustments / returns	3 min	258 h	$9,061
Invoice creation in QBO	3 min	258 h	$9,061
Payment posting	3 min	258 h	$9,061
A/R follow-ups + statements	4 min	344 h	$12,081
Supplier consolidated orders	25 min	45 h	$1,580
Total	**–**	**1,851 h**	**$65,005**

Row costs are hours × $35.12 ($59,000 fully loaded ÷ 1,680 scheduled hours), rounded to the nearest dollar. The total is the study's own figure.

1,851 hours is more than a full-time position (1.10 FTE against a 1,680-hour scheduled year, fully loaded at ~$59,000). That single study identified **$65,005 in recurring annual labour that produces no value** - it's pure friction inside the order-to-cash cycle.

> **Find your scenario** → Five typical ROI scenarios are laid out in Section 5 - find the one closest to your operation. For a first-pass estimate, visit wegotrade.com/#calculate-savings.

SECTION 4

The Four Stages of a Modern Order-to-Cash Operation

A modern dairy distribution operation runs on four distinct operational stages - Order Capture, Delivery + Invoicing, Payment, and A/R Automation - all connected through a real-time ERP integration layer. Each stage tackles a specific category of manual friction. Each is independently deployable - start with the stage that hurts most today and add the others at your own pace. The full stack is what produces the full-employee reclaim.

Stage 1 – Order Capture

Replace the phone, email, fax, and text channels with a single online ordering interface. Customers self-serve 24/7. Standing orders run automatically. Your order desk staff sees at a glance who hasn't ordered this week - and only needs to act on exceptions, not chase every account. Orders flow directly into your ERP without re-keying.

Replaces: Manual phone/email order entry into QuickBooks, Acomba, SAP, or Sage.
Annual recovery: ~586 hours / ~$20,600 *(per documented baseline, order capture plus consolidated orders)*

Stage 2 – Delivery + Invoicing

The driver app lets drivers adjust or create orders directly at the customer's site - managing sales, returns, and substitutions on the spot. The customer receives a digital invoice that reflects exactly what was delivered. When the invoice matches what the client received, there are no grounds for adjustment requests - which means fewer disputes and faster payment. No paper notes. No back-office reconciliation when the driver returns.

Replaces: Driver paperwork plus office reconciliation, double-entry of returns into the ERP.
Annual recovery: ~413 hours / ~$14,500 in labour, plus the elimination of reconciliation errors that compound into customer disputes.

Stage 3 – Payment

The B2B payment module is a **flat-fee service - no percentage commission**. Customers pay by bank transfer or credit card. Pre-authorized debits (PAD) automate recurring payments based on invoice payment terms - so collection happens on schedule without anyone having to chase it. Every payment posts to your accounting system in real time.

Annual recovery: ~219 hours / ~$7,700 in labour + ~2% of B2B payment volume in avoided processing fees.

Stage 4 – A/R Automation

Automated reminders. Automated statements. Customers can see their own balance at any time. It's even possible to manage a Cash on Delivery scenario using the pre-authorized payment functionality - ensuring payment is collected at the time of delivery, without a manual step. The result is money in your account faster, fewer chase emails, and a cash position you can actually plan around.

Annual recovery: ~275 hours / ~$9,700 in labour plus DSO compression, which directly improves working capital.

ERP Integration – The Connective Layer

ERP integration is what makes the four stages above actually work. Every order, delivery, invoice, and payment flows in and out of your accounting software automatically - QuickBooks Online, SAP Business One, Microsoft Business Central, Sage 300, Acomba, NetSuite, and others. This eliminates double entry entirely. The savings in Stages 1-4 are only achievable because this layer exists. It's not a standalone saving - it's what unlocks all the others.

Annual Savings Recap – All Four Stages

All savings below are enabled by real-time ERP integration.

STAGE	HOURS RECOVERED / YR	ANNUAL SAVINGS
Stage 1 - Order Capture	~586 h	~$20,600
Stage 2 - Delivery + Invoicing	~413 h	~$14,500
Stage 3 - Payment	~219 h	~$7,700 labour + payment fee savings
Stage 4 - A/R Automation	~275 h	~$9,700
Full stack (all 4 stages)	**~1,494 h**	**~$52,500**

Numbers use the documented Quebec independent baseline (scenario 1, ~430 orders/month). Your actual recovery will depend on order volume, loaded labour rate, and which stages you deploy. See Section 5 for scenario-specific projections at different scales.

SECTION 5

Five Scenarios – Find Yours

Every dairy distributor at the $5-200M scale operates differently. Some run 1-2 DSD trucks and most orders flow through a small office team. Some run 15+ trucks and a dedicated rep team. We've built five archetypes to help you self-identify. Each one shows the recommended stage stack, expected annual savings, and typical payback period.

$31,668 to $950,248

DOCUMENTED NET ANNUAL SAVINGS, SMALLEST TO LARGEST SCENARIO

4 to 8 months

PAYBACK RANGE ACROSS ALL FIVE SCENARIOS

#	ARCHETYPE	REVENUE	VOLUME	STACK	NET SAVINGS / YR	PAYBACK
1	Small independent, 2 drivers	$3.9M	~430/mo	Stages 1+2+3+4 + ERP	$31,668	7.9 mo
2	Regional SMB, 6 drivers	$10.7M	~1,190/mo	Stages 1+2+3+4 + ERP	$94,429	6.2 mo
3	Mid-size, 14 drivers + 3 CSRs	$26.8M	~2,975/mo	All 4 stages + ERP	$228,299	4.8 mo
4	Large account	$96.3M	~10,700/mo	Stages 1+3+4 + ERP	$467,150	4.0 mo
5	Large processor	$192.6M	~21,400/mo	Stages 1+3+4 + ERP	$950,248	5.2 mo

Each scenario is its own documented cost and benefit study, built at a $750 average order value with 80% of the effort automated and 20% left for exception handling. Scenarios 1 to 3 include DSD delivery. Scenarios 4 and 5 exclude it. For scenarios 3 to 5 the savings and ROI describe steady state once implementation is complete, and only the payback period reflects the real year-one path. Your actual savings depend on your specific mix of DSD routes, rep coverage, ERP, and payment volume.

Calculate Your Own ROI - Three Ways

1. Use the savings slider at wegotrade.com/#calculate-savings - takes 60 seconds.
2. Find your archetype in the table above and adjust proportionally to your volume.
3. Talk to a dairy distribution specialist - a 30-minute call builds a number around your specific operation.

SECTION 6

Two Real-Life Examples

Two real Canadian dairy operators. The numbers are documented.

Case Study #1 – A Quebec Independent Dairy Distributor

$3.9M in revenue. Roughly 430 orders per month. QuickBooks Online. One to two DSD trucks. Family-owned. Owner approaching succession planning. The study we ran with the team last year produced the numbers used as the baseline throughout this whitepaper.[2]

1,851 h MANUAL WORK / YEAR (BEFORE)	**$65,005** ANNUAL COST (BEFORE)
$31,668 NET SAVINGS YEAR 1	**7.9 mo** PAYBACK PERIOD

What the owner cared about wasn't the percentage return. It was the practical question: "Can I prepare the business for transition without hiring more people I'd have to train, manage, and eventually lay off?" The answer turned out to be yes. The operation now runs with the same headcount but produces more output, cleaner books, and an exit narrative the owner can credibly defend to a buyer or successor.

> *"I wasn't looking for ROI. I was looking for a way to step back without dropping the ball.* ***WEGOTRADE*** *gave me the operational stability to start that conversation."*
>
> - QUEBEC INDEPENDENT DAIRY DISTRIBUTOR OWNER (STUDY CONDUCTED LAST YEAR)

ROI = Return on Investment - annual savings ÷ platform cost × 100. A 7.9-month payback means you've recovered your full cost before the end of month 8; everything after is net gain.

Case Study #2 – A Large Dairy Processor

Scenario 5 of 5. A large processor running 21,400 orders a month on $192.6M in revenue, with 21 customer service staff. It delivers directly to its customers, and delivery management comes in a later phase. Same operational method as Case Study #1, measured the same way, at fifty times the order volume. The point of including it isn't to suggest you should aim for this scale; it's to show the same model holds across the whole revenue band.[3]

21,400 ORDERS PER MONTH	**$950,248** NET ANNUAL SAVINGS
35,096 h HOURS FREED PER YEAR	**5.2 mo** PAYBACK, 337% ROI

The study measured 64,200 hours of manual order-to-cash work at this operation, task by task, across a full year - the equivalent of 38 full-time people. Automating 80% of that effort frees 35,096 hours and $950,248 a year, with 20% left for exception handling. The same method that produces a 7.9-month payback for a Quebec independent at 430 orders a month produces a 5.2-month payback here at 21,400. **The model holds at both ends of the band - that's the point.**

This scenario assumes 50% of orders move to self-service capture and 60% of payments automate, and it excludes delivery, since this has been postponed to a phase 2 of the project. The savings and ROI are steady state once adoption settles; the 5.2-month payback reflects the year-one path.

SECTION 7

Vendor Evaluation

Most dairy distributors evaluating dairy distribution software or an order-to-cash platform are going through this for the first time. The questions below are designed to help you compare any vendor - including us - on the dimensions that actually matter for Canadian dairy operations.

The 10-Question RFP

#	QUESTION	WHY IT MATTERS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WEGOTRADE	ALT 1 YOUR EVAL	ALT 2 YOUR EVAL
1	Does the vendor include a multi-vendor buyer network?	More buyers = faster client adoption without sales effort	Network size + F&B coverage	✓ more than 21,000 connected businesses		
2	Bilingual EN/FR + Quebec-native support?	Quebec clients and ops teams work in French - a translated UI isn't enough	Native FR ops, not just translated UI	✓ Yes		
3	White-label / private community option?	Marketplace gives access to thousands of buyers; white-label gives a fully branded private B2B platform. The strongest vendors let you choose either - or run both.	Marketplace exposure, fully branded private platform, or both	✓ Both - Marketplace (more than 21,000 buyers) + private white-label.		
4	ERP integration: QBO, SAP, BC, Sage, Acomba?	No integration = double entry continues = zero net saving	Real-time, bi-directional sync - no manual export	✓ Yes - all major ERPs, real-time		
5	B2B payments without percentage fee?	% fees on volume destroy the ROI at any meaningful scale	Flat fee per transaction, not % of value	✓ Flat fee only		
6	F&B-specific workflows out of the box?	Generic platforms require months of configuration before you see value	No custom dev or long config required	✓ Yes - no configuration required		
7	Native DSD driver app?	Drivers need a simple mobile tool - not a web form on a phone	Dedicated driver app, works offline	✓ WEGODeliver		
8	Supports consolidated supplier order management?	Reduces time spent consolidating orders to send to your suppliers	Aggregates client orders into consolidated supplier transmissions	✓ Yes		
9	Proven at enterprise scale in dairy?	Proof the model works - not just a demo environment	Reference customers in Canadian dairy	✓ See case study #2 above		
10	Client adoption rate benchmark for active distributors?	The savings only land if your customers actually order online	Percentage of orders placed online, plus the onboarding method for existing customers	✓ 70 to 100% of orders received online by active distributors		

SECTION 8

Next Step

If any part of this whitepaper resonated with your operation, the next step is a 30-minute discovery call. We'll map your specific situation to one of the five scenarios in **Section 5**, run your numbers through our cost-benefit study framework, and tell you whether the math actually works for your business. If it doesn't, we'll tell you that too.

Bring Your Operations Leads

The people who will feel the difference most are the ones doing the work today. Bring your sales manager, your customer service team, whoever manages deliveries, and your controller or bookkeeper. These are the people whose day changes - and whose buy-in makes the rollout stick. You don't need IT involved to get started.

30 minutes. Your numbers. Our team.

Mention this whitepaper for a same-week booking.

BOOK YOUR CALL

wegotrade.com/schedule-a-consultation-discussion

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SOURCES & NOTES

1 Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January 2026. Average hourly earnings, transportation and warehousing sector. Table 14-10-0223-01. ↩

2 Quebec independent dairy distributor cost-benefit study, conducted by **WEGOTRADE** last year. Anonymized for publication. ↩

3 Documented ROI study, scenario 5 of 5, dated 20 July 2026. Manual order-to-cash effort measured task by task across a full year at $750 average order value and a $35.12 loaded hourly rate, then modelled at 80% effort automation. Not a projection from a growth curve. ↩

Together Business Is Made Easier - Ensemble on facilite les affaires !

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