Waitrose embraces mobile working and enhances productivity with workplace transformation

Customer challenge
Waitrose’s head office ensures the smooth operation of its business and more than 300 UK stores. To ensure Partners based there are equipped to do their jobs as effectively as possible, Waitrose needs to provide the latest technologies. With its existing Windows XP platform nearing end of support, the retailer decided to migrate to Windows 7, but it needed a partner to assist with such a large-scale project.

Computacenter solution
With an up-to-date and standardised platform for workplace IT, Waitrose has been able to simplify IT support as well as eliminating the risks and costs of running an unsupported operating system. It has also enabled 23 per cent more Partners to work flexibly with mobile devices, helping to increase Partner satisfaction and productivity.

Results
Waitrose partnered with Computacenter to roll out more than 3,000 new Windows 7 devices. Computacenter managed the logistics involved in the project and migrated users from an onsite configuration room. Thanks to its proven processes, the project was completed on time and to budget with most Partners experiencing no more than 10 minutes of downtime.
Customer profile:

**Bringing high quality, ethical products to UK homes**

With more than 300 supermarkets throughout the UK, Waitrose is the sixth largest grocery retailer in the country and part of the John Lewis Partnership. This means that its employees – known as Partners – are co-owners in the organisation with a say in how it is run and a share in the rewards of successful business.

Waitrose is focused on providing customers with great value, quality produce that has been sustainably sourced. The company’s ethical guidelines, ‘The Waitrose Way’, stipulate it must strive to provide healthy, locally sourced produce from sustainable sources, maintain strong relationships with suppliers and tread lightly on the environment.

Business challenge:

**Meeting changing demands in workplace IT**

The majority of Waitrose’ key business functions, including marketing, store design, property management and customer service are run from its head office in Bracknell, Berkshire. In order to serve stores and customers effectively, Partners based at the site must be equipped with the latest technologies.

Lisa Smith, Project Manager at Waitrose, comments: “Mobility, flexible working and employee expectations are all changing the requirements for workplace IT. To safeguard Partner satisfaction and productivity, we need an IT environment that is fit for today’s workstyles.”

The retailer’s existing IT environment was largely based on Windows XP. With Microsoft ending support for the operating system in April 2014, Waitrose was keen to upgrade to a newer platform not only to improve productivity, but also to reduce risk and cost.

“Retaining paid support from Microsoft for Windows XP would have been really costly,” says Lisa. “But the risk of running an unsupported platform was also high, with the security threats increasing every month without patches or updates.”

Waitrose therefore decided to update its workplace environment to Windows 7.

IT solution:

**Establishing a contemporary workplace**

To prevent disruption to business as usual, Waitrose decided to engage Computacenter to assist with the project in April 2013. “We’d worked with Computacenter before on a number of projects, and knew it was experienced in Windows 7 migrations,” explains Lisa.

As well as upgrading the operating system, Waitrose took the opportunity to standardise its workplace hardware, rationalise its applications and upgrade to Microsoft Office 2007.

The retailer selected two desktop and three laptop models, all from Lenovo, as the basis for its new workplace environment. Lisa comments: “Computacenter helped us explore the options available to us for the higher specification models, which were lightweight laptops with larger screens.”

Partners had some choice over their device depending on their job role, with higher specification desktops for developers and IT support staff, and higher specification laptops for mobile workers using high-performance applications.

“Now we have an up-to-date workplace environment at the head office that empowers Partners to work more effectively, we can provide better customer services and support growth while adhering to The Waitrose Way.”

Lisa Smith
Project Manager, Waitrose
Computacenter was responsible for the complex logistics involved in upgrading more than 3,000 users across the five-building campus to the new devices and operating system. An onsite room was set up to configure the devices and migrate data.

Vicky Sutherland, Solution Specialist at Computacenter, comments: “We used our Tempo project management methodology and Windows 7 optimised migration processes to minimise risk and disruption and maximise efficiency.”

As a result, most Partners experienced minimal downtime. “Partners were up and running on their new devices within just 10 minutes of giving up their old hardware, and have been working seamlessly ever since,” adds Lisa.

Computacenter provided floor-walking services to help Partners adjust to the new operating system. It also arranged for the legacy hardware to be remarketed and recycled by its specialist subsidiary, RDC, following a five-day quarantine period to ensure there were no data issues. “Working with RDC to remarket and recycle the hardware meant we got a good return on devices that weren’t quite end-of-life, and disposal was in keeping with The Waitrose Way,” says Lisa.

The project was completed on time and to budget in December 2013.

Results:

Maximising productivity, minimising risk

Waitrose now has a standardised workplace IT environment at its head office that is fit for now and fit for the future. “Computacenter’s dedication and flexibility were key to the success of the project,” comments Lisa. “When we encountered problems that threatened to delay the project, the Computacenter team pulled out all the stops and worked late to help us stick to our deadline. We received excellent feedback about the engineers and their experience was evident.”

With the new workplace environment, Waitrose has been able to:

Simplify IT support: As well as eliminating the risks associated with running an unsupported operating system, the new hardware and Windows 7 environment is easier to manage and will reduce the volume of support calls.

Embrace flexible working: As part of the project, Waitrose has increased the number of laptop users by 23 per cent. This will enable Partners to adopt new flexible and efficient working styles.

Increase partner productivity: The new devices are faster and offer better performance for certain applications. Partners designing stores in particular can process complicated drawings and plans faster with the 64-bit operating system.

Lisa concludes: “Now we have an up-to-date workplace environment at the head office that empowers Partners to work more effectively, we can provide better customer services and support growth while adhering to The Waitrose Way.”

To find out more about our contemporary workplace services log on to www.computacenter.com/services

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