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Ricoh helps Carpetright cut IT costs by 50%, improve store productivity, deploy mobile technology to drive smarter working

A Ricoh break-fix support service for Carpetright stores has seen the business reduce IT costs by up to 50% while dramatically improving quality of service. It has helped increase user productivity and store up-time. It has also developed a trusted partnership between Carpetright and Ricoh that has led to more improvements in strategic IT services and introduced innovative, mobile technologies to drive smarter working.

Executive summary

Name: Carpetright
Location: Purfleet, Essex
Size: 3,000 staff
Activity: Retail

Challenges

- Strategic objective for more streamlined business services
- Existing store support service costly, inefficient and not fit for purpose

Solution

- Ricoh IT Services
- 3-year break-fix support service
- End user management
- In-store mobile PoS system and hardware upgrade

Benefits

- Drives up store productivity and efficiency by reducing store and IT equipment down time
- Estimated to cut in-store IT service costs by up to 50%
- Achieves 90%, sub-4-hour fix rate all within agreed SLAs
- Provides a fast, seamless on-site service with automated support tools and processes
- Trusted partnership delivers additional technology innovation

Challenges

Carpetright plc is a floor coverings and beds retailer, trading from 602 stores across the UK, The Netherlands, Belgium and the Republic of Ireland. The company opened its first store in 1988 and has followed a controlled store expansion programme developing both organically and through acquisition within the UK and other European countries.

Carpetright has an enterprise-wide strategy to make its business services more efficient and more cost effective. The company's CIO felt that the organisation had too many IT partners, was paying too much for them and that they were not being managed very well. For example, IT support for stores was being provided by multiple suppliers.

Retailers rely heavily on IT to support sales processing so any errors, delays or underperforming IT systems can be a major risk to revenue. Carpetright launched a review of all its IT partners and services. It had chosen Ricoh to support the review process and had tasked Ricoh to focus on the quality of IT within Carpetright stores.

Ricoh was already providing Carpetright with a document and print management solution and had started introducing Carpetright to its portfolio of IT services. "Ricoh produced a very competent, comprehensive proposal, customised for our business. But it was the additional, less tangible aspects that persuaded us to choose Ricoh for our IT review and change programme. Ricoh has a very can-do, hands-on attitude and a flexible, nimble way of working," says Shelagh Whitley, Service Desk/IT Operations Manager, Carpetright plc.

Before starting work, Ricoh helped Carpetright manage an efficient and simple handover from the previous service provider to Ricoh, with a Ricoh project manager working on site with Carpetright for several weeks.

Solution

Carpetright is using a Ricoh managed service to provide break-fix support for IT equipment in 488 high street and retail park stores across the UK. The service covers all equipment from point of sale (PoS) tills and administration desktops to back office servers and print devices. Carpetright handles first-line support, but then passes more complex incidents over to Ricoh. It has set up a dedicated call centre which aims to deal with issues that can be resolved quickly over the phone.

However, because stores do not have on-site technical staff and they prefer a face-to-face experience, most of the time Ricoh will send a technician on site to provide a better quality service for stores. Ricoh has over 1,000 engineers across the UK which is ideal for retail customers like Carpetright because retailers have lots of dispersed sites requiring support. Ricoh engineers, who are all in-house, are located within a few miles of most Carpetright stores so they are able to deliver a fast, cost effective and more personal service.

In addition, Ricoh has deployed a number tools and processes to further improve efficiency. The previous service provider had an inefficient, complex and costly tool for logging calls and sending engineers to site. It meant that parts ordering and distribution out to stores was slow and inaccurate. In comparison, Ricoh has a much simpler system which automatically alerts the relevant engineer about an incident and provides all the required information.

It means Ricoh engineers have full information about an incident before visiting a store, can ensure the right parts are available and can complete jobs faster. Whitley says, "Ricoh has made the break fix support operation much simpler by taking many of the core, day-to-day functions and processes back to basics."

Benefits

The service that Ricoh provides to Carpetright is delivering saving of up to 50 percent while at the same time making the operation more efficient. The savings have been achieved by a simpler and more controlled cost model, use of Ricoh's in-house engineer network rather than multiple third-parties and faster, better quality in-store fixes.

For example, the service helps improve efficiency and productivity in stores because IT equipment downtime has been reduced. Ricoh is achieving a sub-four-hour fix rate of 90 percent for critical impact incidents. Often a Ricoh engineer is getting to a store and resolving the problem significantly under the four-hour target. On high impact incidents Ricoh is achieving a next-day response rate of 96 percent.

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Whitley says, "Working with Ricoh ITS is a far cry from what we have experienced with other suppliers. It's a quick, efficient, excellent service and it is greatly appreciated by our store managers, especially the hands-on, personal touch. Also, with Ricoh's controlled and transparent cost model it's not overshadowed by the feeling that you're being charged every time you pick up the phone."

As well as delivering a better quality of service, one of the other critical benefits for Carpetright is its partnership with Ricoh. Rather than being an ad hoc supplier, Carpetright now sees Ricoh as a trusted and strategic partner helping to improve Carpetright's IT environment even more.

Carpetright uses Ricoh as a knowledge centre providing advice on new concepts and new ideas, and new ways of improve efficiency. Whitley says, "We have an ongoing optimisation dialogue with Ricoh where we are being continually challenged to find better and smarter ways of working across anything and everything we do."

This level of partnership has led Carpetright to trust Ricoh with more of its critical IT operations. For example, Ricoh has been awarded a multi-million pound contract to manage a refresh and upgrade of all IT equipment in stores covering PoS terminals, PCs servers and printers. This will help increase productivity and efficiency in stores.

Knowledge exchange has also led to another new project that Carpetright and Ricoh are investigating around in-store mobility and smarter working. Carpetright stores are usually large retail spaces and when customers walk in the door they are steered towards a static sales desk. Ricoh and Carpetright are about to launch a pilot project to use mobile PoS devices so that staff can move around the store with a customer looking a carpet samples while providing information and quotes on the spot.

Ricoh Solutions/Products

• Ricoh UK-wide IT engineer network
• In-store hardware - servers, PCs, PoS devices, printers

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