



Spotlight Group finds a trusted partner in Motorola



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- Anne McDiarmid, CIO, Spotlight Group

Company Overview

Spotlight Group is Australia’s largest chain of fabric, craft and home interior superstores. The 35 year-old, privately owned Group has over 100 stores situated across Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Spotlight’s customer service philosophy has stimulated its rapid expansion from a single Victorian store that opened in 1973, to a multi national organisation turning over close to a billion dollars annually.

The Challenge : Spotlight’s infrastructure puzzle hinders mobility

When Anne McDiarmid joined Spotlight Group as CIO in 2006, the company’s IT infrastructure was a collection of mismatched and out-dated legacy systems that required constant maintenance.

As McDiarmid explains, “The business had grown significantly during the previous 12 years, and the existing infrastructure was fragmented and struggling to support this growth. Mobility is significant to both our core business and customer service. We rely on mobility for stock-takes, allowing floor-staff to check stock availability, and also in our point of sale systems.

“However, our previous infrastructure pooled together solutions from multiple vendors that didn’t always work well together, and used lower-end devices that weren’t robust or powerful enough to meet our needs. We spent so much time on maintenance that we weren’t experiencing the full benefits of mobility.”



Customer Profile



Company

Spotlight Group

Location

Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore

Industry

Retail

Products

- WS2000 wireless switch and AP300 access port
- MK2250 micro-kiosk
- MC3000 mobile computer
- LS4278 barcode scanner
- MSP mobility services platform

Partner

SUREfire Systems

Application(s)

Windows based retail application integrated with SAP

Benefits

Significant increase in workforce productivity at all 120 stores, and improved customer service



McDiarmid knew that to support Spotlight's continued growth it needed a stable infrastructure and reliable business partners. "We'd outgrown the existing technology. We had to take a more strategic approach if we wanted real benefits from mobility, so we set about replacing our store-level technology as well as the back end infrastructure."

The Solution : Motorola, a trusted end-to-end partner

Spotlight's existing infrastructure was already based on Motorola's wireless networks and according to McDiarmid, it was a logical decision to also introduce Motorola's mobile devices.

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"We wanted one partner, rather than a hybrid solution where bits of the puzzle would always fall out of place. In the past we chose solutions based on price; now we choose devices based on strategy and I knew Motorola was the only vendor truly capable of providing a complete end-to-end solution."

Motorola's Australian partner, SUREfire Systems worked closely with Spotlight to implement an end-to-end, Windows based mobile infrastructure integrated with a newly deployed SAP system.

Spotlight replaced devices used by floor staff with the MC3000 handheld; a small, lightweight device built for applications requiring high-quality data capture and real-time computing. Perfect for scan-intensive processes, the MC3000 can easily be customised to meet the demands of individual jobs.

McDiarmid continues, "Our point of sale systems have been replaced with Motorola's bluetooth enabled LS4278 scanners, which are light, cordless and capable of scanning barcodes and sending them from a distance of 15 feet. We also introduced MK2250 kiosks on the shop floor so customers can conduct their own price checks. All of these devices leverage Motorola's powerful wireless network via WS2000 wireless switch and AP300 access ports."

With a range of devices spread across all stores internationally Spotlight has also implemented Motorola's Mobility Services Platform, which allows for remote and automated management of its mobile devices and wireless networks.

The Benefits : Spotlight serves more customers, more quickly

With a reliable and rugged infrastructure in place at all stores, Spotlight is now able to leverage the full benefits of a mobile workforce.

"As part of our overhaul we implemented an SAP system, and Motorola's devices are powerful enough to provide staff with direct access to our new backend solution. This has strengthened customer service by giving staff the power to check stock availability, and even order new stock with out leaving the customer's side," says McDiarmid.

The MC3000s are used for stock takes, as McDiarmid explains. "The ability to scan and record goods, and update our database on the spot is not only more efficient but also improves the accuracy of our data. Additionally, the devices are so easy to use; they're all touch-screen and they respond quickly. I would estimate that the MC3000s and accompanying software have cut down the time it takes staff to complete stock counts by twenty percent.

“Motorola’s wireless networks are incredibly powerful. We can use the mobile devices anywhere, in any of our stores which is a huge feat when you consider that we have sites as large as 5000sqm.” - Anne McDiarmid, CIO, Spotlight Group

At the checkout stations, Spotlight benefits from Motorola’s LS4278 scanners that feature a specially designed rastering pattern to eliminate the need for exact aim. “We’ve halved transaction times at POS now that staff can scan items much more quickly. The bluetooth capability lets staff take the scanners wherever they need to, so that items such as large rolls of fabric don’t have to be carted up to the counter. Ultimately Motorola has made the staff’s job easier, while giving customers a better service.”

McDiarmid adds, “We’ve also improved customer service by providing them with the ability to conduct price checks on the MK2250 kiosks. This is a powerful tool for us because it improves customers’ Spotlight experience, and frees up our staff to concentrate on other tasks.

“Motorola’s wireless networks are incredibly powerful. We can use the mobile devices anywhere in any of our stores, which is a huge feat when you consider that we have sites as large as 5000 square meters sqm. These are enormous stores, and you can imagine how frustrating it would be to physically leave a customer’s side and visit the stock room to fulfil a request.”

From its support office in Melbourne, Australia Spotlight can cost effectively manage and maintain its fleet of wireless and mobile devices using the Mobility Services Platform (MSP). “It makes my job easier, knowing I can rely on MSP to remotely update our devices with configuration changes and new software, and manage the performance of our wireless network. I can also monitor the fleet and easily identify devices that might need repairs or new batteries. MSP has simplified our maintenance procedures immensely,” says McDiarmid.

With a secure IT strategy in place, Spotlight has the future well mapped out in terms of its relationship with Motorola.

“We’re very happy with the results of the implementation,” McDiarmid concludes. “We want to ensure that we’re secure in the management of our data at the store level. To achieve this we’re looking to introduce Motorola’s AirDefense technology, which will also ensure we’re compliant with wireless security policies. We’ve definitely found our trusted partner in Motorola.”



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