Communication Reimagined: RMS delivers a modern communication approach

Retail Manager Solutions (RMS) is a privately-owned software company based in Hampshire, England that provides retail, hospitality and healthcare teams with a range of SaaS tools that help manage multi-site businesses more effectively.

With solutions designed to support Operations, Compliance, HR, Buying, Project and Marketing teams, RMS are proud to help more than 80 of the best-known brands and retailers, across more than 100,000 locations in 14 different languages.

The RMS mission is simple – to provide software solutions that allow retail, hospitality, and healthcare teams to ‘do business better’ – the team at RMS constantly strives for new & innovative ways to achieve this goal.

RMS have been a Microsoft Partner since the business was established in 2009, and currently hold a Gold ISV competency.

New tools needed

The Entertainer, the United Kingdom’s largest independent toy retailer, approached RMS for an operational communications solution that would provide granular control, targeting, personalization and the ability to measure the reach and compliance of operational communications.

The solution needed to provide a single, consolidated view that was accessible not only in the back office, but also at till points and on mobile devices for field management. Any solution deployed had to be responsive, scalable and above all, reliable.

RMS’ Metro fits the bill

The Entertainer implemented Metro Unified Comms and Process modules, providing the operations team with content management and survey capabilities. The solution, called ‘TOYTALK’ has been optimized for use on all mobile devices, allowing field teams access to information using smartphones, tablets and laptops.

RMS also provided a simple messaging solution that integrates with company email enabling field teams and head office users to communicate in a controlled and managed way.

Realizing the improvements

With communications now controlled by the Operations team at The Entertainer’s head office, stores are no longer inundated with irrelevant or duplicated communications.

Additionally, the implementation has resulted in a significant improvement in store compliance, enabling The Entertainer to gain funding from suppliers and licensors by providing them with confidence that when a promotional plan is implemented, it will be delivered across the estate and documented (should it be required) via confirmed tasks and uploaded photographs.

“The Entertainer was the first RMS customer to adopt Microsoft’s Cloud Technology in 2013 with the project being nominated for Technology Project of the Year at the 2014 Retail Systems Awards. Since then, both RMS and The Entertainer have continued to work closely, developing new functionality within the Metro product.”

— Karen Dyke, Managing Director, RMS
With rapid growth, The Entertainer recognized the need to review the tools they used to manage their retail operations, particularly those relating to communications and compliance. Until that point, traditional forms of communication had been used such as telephone, written memos and email. As the estate grew, however, these methods resulted in stores being overwhelmed with operational communications and tasks, without clear visibility from the head office to ensure compliance.

The Entertainer approached RMS to provide them with an operational communications solution that would enable better control, targeting, and personalization of communications while also providing the ability to measure their reach and compliance. The solution needed to provide a single consolidated view that was accessible not only in the back office but also at till points and on mobile devices for field management. Given how crucial timely communication and compliance is to any retail business, any solution deployed had to be responsive, scalable and above all, reliable.

RMS’ Metro solutions provide a modern approach

The Entertainer implemented Metro’s Unified Comms and Process modules, providing the operations team with content management, task, and survey capabilities. Unified Comms (one of 9 product lines available within Metro) is a cloud first SaaS solution built on Azure and uses the following PaaS and Serverless resources: App Service; SQL Azure, CosmosDb; Redis; Azure Storage; Application Insights; Service Bus; Azure Functions; Media Services; Traffic Manager; Logic Apps.

The solution, called ‘TOYTALK’ has been optimized for use on all mobile devices, allowing field teams to access critical information using their smartphones, tablets, and laptops. This enabled task compliance, surveys, and store visits to be completed more effectively in a way that suited the individual.

RMS also provided a simple messaging solution that integrates with company email and has enabled field teams and head office users to communicate in a more efficient way. Communications are now controlled and managed by the Operations team at The Entertainer’s head office ensuring that stores are not inundated with irrelevant or duplicated communications.

Additionally, the solution provides an electronic daily journal for store managers to capture, record, and share key trading information, incidents and events. There is also a conference calling facility integrated within the solution to enable stores, areas, and regions to quickly discuss and share information. The Entertainer use TOYTALK to automatically publish targeted warehouse distribution communications and to manage how operational supplies are ordered.

All this has resulted in an average of 99 percent improvement in store compliance. This has enabled The Entertainer to gain funding from suppliers and licensors by providing them with confidence that when a promotional plan is implemented, it will be delivered across the estate and documented (should it be required) via confirmed tasks and uploaded photographs.

“We are all very excited about the new capabilities the RMS solution provides us. The integrated voice capability is very exciting and provides us with a significant ROI and capability. As a rapidly expanding business, having a solution that can be changed and configured by us to meet changing business needs and structure is essential. RMS’ solution enables us to easily measure our operational comms effectiveness with respect to reach and compliance.”

— Steve Shepherd, Head of Operations and Customer Support, The Entertainer