

The Watch Lab

Case Study



The Client

The term 'watch repairs' often still conjures up an image of an elderly man hunched over a back-room workbench, looking through a magnifying glass at the tiny mechanism he is repairing. For a contemporary take on an age-old craft, The Watch Lab was created.

This unique business brings together timeless skills, latest technology, bespoke tools and modern trading practices across shops, workshops and the internet. It prides itself on high standards, working with both mainstream products and covetable brands such as Rolex and Breitling.

The Watch Lab is a family concern and employs 38 staff. The business is based at a head office in Preston which also houses the main workshop, and has seven further branches in cities across the North-West. Each branch has a smaller, onsite workshop for less complex repairs. An ancillary operation retails new watches via the shops and the e-commerce web site www.impressivetime.co.uk.



"The Cybertill and J2 system has made us a better business and we are very happy with it. It has resulted in measurable cost savings and helped us to develop in a number of areas."

Sheila Derbyshire, Accounts Manager at The Watch Lab

The Solution

The Benefits

- Staff find the new software and hardware easy to learn and fast to use
- Migration from an earlier system was straightforward
- Reporting on live performance data has resulted in better management
- Opting for a hosted service has obviated the need for inhouse IT staff and has generated annual cost savings of £60,000+
- The capacity for greater independence has motivated staff and released the partners for new business development
- The bespoke workshop module makes The Watch Lab a more efficient business.

The Process

Prior to its relationship with Cybertill, The Watch Lab had no inhouse EPoS and worked on a very simple Access database to record customer transactions. As the business grew and the branch structure developed, it became increasingly challenging for the partners to dedicate time to each location and to have an up-to-date picture of business performance as a whole. The decision was taken to invest in new EPoS technology and the evaluation began.

Cybertill secured the contract for three reasons. Firstly, its provision of live data across the business, at any time and from anywhere, was compelling. Because the system is deployed as hosted service via a web browser, it requires no inhouse IT staff and hardware. This makes it cost-effective. Finally, Cybertill showed its creativity and willingness to develop a bespoke workshop management system.

As software development came to a close, Cybertill turned to its long-term hardware partner, J2 Retail Systems, and selected fourteen of J2's 920 PC-based touchscreen tills for installation across the eight locations.

The Watch Lab's Accounts Manager, Sheila Derbyshire, was made responsible for system rollout and training. Once trained, branch staff migrated easily from their old system and found the Cybertill application and the J2 tills fast to learn and intuitive to use.

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The Results

The new system gives an unprecedented level of management intelligence, highlighting how the business performs, the mistakes it makes and any staff training issues.

Explains Sheila Derbyshire: *"One of the things we love the most is seeing live data online. This is invaluable. It improves our branch management and means that the partners can have an eye on all locations without having to visit as much."*

System-generated reports contribute to the smooth operation of the business. Staff can interrogate customer records, review problems, verify charges, and check workshop details. The customer archive makes it easy to access past transactions, ideal for returning customers or for recurrent problems.

The Watch Lab no longer needs a top-heavy management culture. Reports are simple for branch staff to create. They also like being in control of their performance, rather than

waiting for head office to tell them how they are doing. Individual statistics lead to a spirit of competitiveness within the branches, and when the partners need to discuss trading performance with branch managers, everyone has the same version of the truth to work from.

"The system manages itself," continues Sheila Derbyshire. It is intuitive and requires no inhouse IT staff or servers. This has generated significant savings. Two former management positions, of Operations Manager and Support Manager, have not been replaced and this is giving the business an annual saving in excess of £60,000.

The system's ease of management and the control it allows over the business have freed the partners to develop new business areas such as the creation of www.impressivetime.co.uk, a transactional e-commerce site where customers can purchase new watches, jewellery and accessories.

About J2 Retail Systems

J2 Retail Systems is a specialist manufacturer of PC-based touchscreens, LCD touchscreen monitors and point-of-sale hardware to the retail, hospitality and leisure industries. With 50,000+ units installed worldwide, its clients include leading-brand retailers such as Greggs and Thresher Group, and hospitality and leisure operators including several cinema chains, and hundreds of pubs and restaurants.

By controlling its own design and manufacture, J2 has built a reputation for innovation, reliability and cost-effectiveness. Credited with introducing 'thin client' EPoS to the market, J2 uses emergent technologies wherever possible to reduce the cost of hardware ownership.

About Cybertill Limited

Software house, Cybertill, prides itself on providing one of the few solutions that performs as well in a single channel as when integrating point-of-sale activity across stores, e-commerce web sites and mail-order.

With a client base including Farrow & Ball, British Red Cross and St Paul's Cathedral, Cybertill's hosted service has become the EPoS system of choice for retailers in many sectors of non-food retailing. The company supports thousands of

store-based users and hundreds of web-based businesses in the UK, Europe and the USA.

Clients range from the smallest to the very largest of businesses: from single store boutiques right through to retailers with hundreds of stores, from start-ups to established global brands. Cybertill solutions level the playing field for young or smaller retailers and provide a springboard for growth for more mature businesses.

The J2 920



The J2 920 represents leading-edge technology for the most demanding point-of-sale, point-of-service, and point-of-information device markets. This industry-standard open platform uses Intel's latest technology, the M1.2GHz processor, and can operate a broad range of operating systems and peripheral options such as Wireless Connectivity, Dual VGA Screens, CD Rom, DVD, and iButton.

Durability has not been compromised in the 920's sleek and elegant design. Designed with longevity in mind and engineered to withstand harsh environments, this is a robust and dependable system. Cost-effective pricing, J2's trademark 3-year warranty and inbuilt Chip & PIN compliance make it the de facto system for retailers and the hospitality trade.

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