

HARNESSING IT

INTERVIEWS

Russell Fairchild

DIRECTOR



Taylor Made
COMPUTER SOLUTIONS

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In a series of interviews with Taylor Made Computer Solutions, directors reveal what they perceive to be the issues if IT is to deliver key objectives.

The interviews will be brought together as a report to be published by DECISION magazine and then as a digital book.

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WHEN YOUR COMPANY has more than fifty lorries delivering expensive products to customers all over the south, it helps if you know exactly where your vehicles are at any given time and where they've been – and that's where the great value of IT is for the fuel, lubricants and engineering services provider WP Group.

"Good IT should enable us to know everything about our vehicles, products and customers," says director Russell Fairchild.

To complement an onboard computer system which provides telematics and other fleet management functions, WP Group commissioned a new customer relationship management system so they could map the whole customer journey.

"As we grew the board we needed a better way of understanding trends and recording them, and what we have developed now is something really useful to our company strategically and operationally," explains Fairchild.

The technology means that the moment a driver makes a delivery, this can be seen in the CRM system. "We can predict if a driver is going to run out of time or product," says Fairchild. "We know exactly where each driver is; if they're in the middle of nowhere and have not moved for an hour we know there's a problem."

With eight operating centres, the system means WP Group can plan deliveries very precisely, to their own depots as well as to customers - which creates greater efficiencies and better customer service, Fairchild adds.

"The technology has changed the way we sell. We have created delivery zones and these are the areas we sell into. It means our planners can

seamlessly route our fleet more effectively, which has made a huge difference."

The operational system that plans the driver routes is linked to a system for accounting and order processing. This is another relatively new development as it replaces an earlier bespoke system that was "frustratingly slow."

The idea of the various changes to the IT system is that any kind of information they need, whether it be about a tanker location, or the latest marketing material, or a customer's credit check, can be easily located and pulled off the system.

"I'd say we're 99% there," says Fairchild. What he wants is for the system to enhance the company's ability to nimbly investigate new ideas and make changes where required.

Similarly, he believes it's important that the staff who use any given system, and particularly a new one, have got genuine 'buy-in'. "Instead of an IT professional embedding the CRM, we use the people who use it to champion and develop it throughout the group," he points out.

"Before, people used to say that they did things a certain way to work around the system, so instead, we wanted IT that worked around people. If the system is used to its full potential we provide a better service. We don't want it to be tick boxes; we want complete buy-in from the staff."

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Despite all the tech, Fairchild points out that the company, which started in 1960, remains “very much a people business”, with most orders still placed over the phone. This is particularly so in the domestic heating market, where many customers are older and/or live in rural locations.

Indeed, people, as in WP’s own staff, are an essential barrier to cyber crime. Fairchild is well aware that if banks and governments can be caught out, then so can any business.

Which is why WP use an outside company to monitor systems and train the staff. ‘Your staff protect your company because of how they function here, they have become a human firewall,’ he says.

All 150 staff are tested through the sending of ‘phishing’ emails, designed to test how vigilant they are to random requests for financial or other information. If a significant number of staff click on the fake email, says Fairchild, then we know we need to do more training.

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I N T E R V I E W S



Established in 1994, Taylor Made Computer Solutions are one of the largest and most highly-ranked IT service and support organisations in the south, currently employing over 110 staff.

Taylor Made are the first technology company in the region to have gained a third consecutive gold award from Investors in People. Taylor Made are also ISO 9001:2008 certified.

The company has been ranked in the top 10 managed service providers in Europe the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) in a leading annual industry survey from MSPmentor since 2012.

Taylor Made are a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, HP Preferred Partner and a NetApp Silver Partner.

Services include:

IT support, IT strategy, IT consultancy, hosted telephony, project management, Securo online back-up, hosted solutions, remote management and monitoring, cloud solutions, disaster recovery, remote access, outsource engineering, security, service desk support.

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