



STAYING AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION

Winterhalter is a market-leading supplier of warewash systems – high quality glass and dishwashing machines for the commercial market. Pubs, restaurants, retailers, hotels, hospitals and many other business rely on the Winterhalter package – comprehensive pre – sale advice; the machine itself; the design and installation; plus training, service and maintenance contracts.

“We have always looked at IT as an enabler”, explained David Parsons Winterhalter’s UK Finance and IT Director. “We started by looking at the problems experienced by our field engineers and our internal staff. We found that many of these were down to paper based systems we were running. Introducing PDA based real-time wireless communications in the field dispensed with paperwork and enabled our engineers to be much more efficient”.

“In an organisation like ours it’s about managing the whole process efficiently, from booking in the job, allocation to the engineer, fixing the machine, right through to raising the final invoice. We improved our service management systems, connected our engineers wirelessly and removed the paperwork in the field but we were still left with the distinct feeling that we were not getting the best from our resources,” explained Parsons.

Winterhalter’s engineers working ten hour shifts could handle between 4 and 5 jobs per day. Each engineer worked 4 days on a seven day shift pattern. Four hour attendance SLAs are the norm but when a new contract demanded a four hour ‘time-to-fix’ the operational parameters began to change.

Winterhalter employed four personnel working solely on the job allocation. “It was obvious that our allocation team were being continually challenged and that our customers were demanding a level of service that we were finding increasingly difficult to satisfy”, explained David Parsons. “You would only have to have an engineer report in sick and the whole schedule would need to be revisited. We had the resources in the field to do the job but we did not have the ability to make the most of them, so once again we looked to IT to enable us to overcome the problem”.

“We began to question drive time between service visits, geographical location of engineers, parts availability and skill sets in an effort to determine how we could improve our SLA hit rate. Failure to meet with the service expectations affects our major performance benchmark and puts the whole operation into question. Failing to meet SLAs could also lead to loss of business,” continued Parsons.

Early in 2004 Winterhalter began discussions with scheduling and resource optimisation specialist 360 scheduling. 360 had to prove that their ‘Dynamic Scheduling Engine’ could improve SLA achievement and integrate successfully with the service management system.

“The ‘Holy Grail’ was automated despatch that would take into account all the



WINTERHALTER WASHWARE PRODUCTS AND SYSTEMS

Winterhalter’s National Service Division employs over 80 engineers working nationwide, servicing Winterhalter’s own machines including those of its Classic subsidiary, as well as other third party machines. The division handles a number of National Accounts, which includes prestigious names like Whitbread, Mitchells & Butlers, Spirit Group, Green King, Regent Inns, and Sainsbury’s.



service parameters that we could throw at the system and improve our levels of service achievement,” Said David Parsons. “360 took a month’s worth of our historic operational data and ran it through their system. We were sceptical at first but when we saw the results we were impressed by the marked level of improvement,” continues Parsons.

Winterhalter ran a pilot with 6 engineers from their West Midlands region and ran the system for a period of two weeks. The results showed a significant improvement over the manual approach and the roll out began at the beginning of 2005.

In the new operating environment Winterhalter’s call centre teams enter the job into the service management system as before. Seamless integration enables the complete system to run as one with 360’s Dynamic Scheduling Engine allocating the jobs to engineers and monitoring progress in real time. 360 built the whole real-time interface without requiring any changes to the existing service management/mobile system or involvement by their suppliers.

The system can be ‘tweaked’ to provide efficiencies for example by changing an engineer’s area of operation. It has highlighted areas where engineer coverage was too low to sustain service levels and provides a wealth of statistical information and reporting that Winterhalter are starting to take full advantage of.

Implementation has resulted in several operational changes, inevitable cultural change plus of course the expected and unexpected business benefits. One person now handles job allocation, monitoring the system and interacting with field engineers, as compared with 4 people previously. An assistant provides back up as required. The time spent talking to engineers on the phone has decreased and this has meant that mobile costs have come down.

In the field, engineers no longer have to manage their time as the system does a better job! Engineers spend less time travelling between jobs, do less miles and use less fuel, and are therefore more productive. In terms of raw performance indicators the SLA hit rate is substantially improved and the number of jobs completed each day has increased. Service has been improved by recruiting engineers in geographical areas where the system highlighted problems.

“The call centre is busier than ever but the difference is that we now know what is happening simply by looking at the status screen”, said David Parsons. “The air of semi-controlled panic has gone and been replaced by quiet efficiency. By improving the SLA hit rate we have cut down the need for manual interventions, which can throw schedules and compromise other customers’ jobs,”

David Parsons—Finance Director

“As Finance Director I have to justify any IT spend in terms of operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and of course its impact on the bottom line. We have seen significant benefits in terms of levels of service, field engineer efficiency, costs savings and are confident of a healthy return on our investment,”

David Parsons—Finance Director