

CASE STUDY

RETAIL SECTOR

YO! SUSHI



YO! Sushi is known the world over for its novel casual dining approach. First introduced in Soho in 1997, its trademark 'kaiten' conveyor belt and colour-coded dishes now feature in a 100 restaurants globally, with 80 sites in the UK. Innovation has been a guiding principle ever since, and the company recently committed to becoming the stand-out restaurant group for tech-driven ideas and initiatives. However, it also recognised that it would need the strongest possible foundations on which to build out these capabilities and turned to Redcentric for help.

CHALLENGES

Towards the end of 2016, YO! Sushi appointed Adam Barlow as its new head of IT with a clear remit – to enable the organisation to leapfrog its competitors in respect of innovative technology, driving both the customer experience and operational efficiency.

But before he could set about designing and delivering his defining strategy for the future, Adam needed to address some very real issues in the present:

- **A poorly performing company WAN** – This was causing regular extended outages across the company's restaurant network, some running into days, disrupting operations and customer payments, delaying critical reporting, denting customer confidence and staff morale, and ultimately impacting revenues.
- **Lack of support focus or accountability** – The nature of the contract had support split between prime and sub-contractors, with neither moving to take responsibility for issues and complicating the escalation process.
- **Commercial inflexibility** – The contract with the incumbent supplier was not geared to the dynamic nature of the business, where outlets can open and close quickly.
- **No partnership ethos** – A future of innovation built on firm foundations was slipping away all the time the incumbent demonstrated no real commitment to the relationship.

REALISING THE BENEFITS

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Adam Barlow,
Head of IT,
YO! Sushi



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As Adam Barlow explains: "We had made a commitment to accelerate change and overtake the pacesetters in our sector and here we were being hobbled on a daily basis by sub-par tech and support. I was aware of Redcentric's retail track record and their extensive service portfolio, so that was basis enough to sit down with them to explore the immediate priorities of a new fit-for-purpose WAN and converged data and voice with the introduction of Unity IP. And from the get-go, it was their attitude and approach that impressed as much as their very obvious technical capabilities – given where we want to take the business, that was critical for me."

HOW REDCENTRIC HELPED

After an extensive, diligent tender process YO! Sushi gave Redcentric preferred partner status and the two teams started collaborating on the solution design and migration path. Adam Barlow continues: "Redcentric had already demonstrated the sort of client-centricity we were after in the contracting phase, with us wanting and getting the sort of commercial flexibility we needed in relation to adding and removing sites without penalty. But then we got into the teeth of the project and it was at this point that we saw the calibre and capabilities that have marked Redcentric out as one of the UK's leading managed service providers.

"Let me share two examples:

- **Adaptability, responsiveness and pragmatism** – The planned WAN and telephony project had its time-tabling seriously jeopardised by an unexpected issue with Head Office connectivity. Redcentric immediately moved to find a solution by cleverly

TECHNICAL INFO

- Managed Firewall Service
- Managed Network Services
- Managed IP Telephony Service
- Calls and Lines
- Hardware Services & Support

re-architecting the design for a short-term workaround that would keep the 80-site migration on track. What could have been a stressful scenario with real operational risk was avoided by their very calm, assured and intelligent response.

- **Application and thoroughness** – The YO! Sushi estate is an extremely challenging one from a physical connectivity and access perspective, with many locations in places like railway stations and airports. Wayleave issues and general permissions had the potential to knock project timings almost at every turn but the Redcentric team were so well drilled, thorough and experienced in this sort of environment that everything ran to time.

"Since go-live last autumn, our connectivity performance has been transformed: it's resilient and reliable, and with intra-company calls now free, we're arguably getting more for less. If there are any issues, they are either resolved before they are service impacting, or dealt with promptly, professionally and proficiently – there's no buck passing. Most important of all, it has given us the security, availability, and quality we need to put at the heart of our business to support our future ambitions – together with the complementary solution offerings and commercial flexibility to help us make that future happen."

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Adam Barlow concludes: "What this project has done for YO! Sushi is very simple: we can now push on with getting into the vanguard of innovation. The fact that it was done so efficiently with excellent lines of communication between the two teams, that it stayed on course despite so many potential roadblocks, and that, above all, it has transformed our WAN environment without incurring a huge price premium or causing a huge upheaval, these are very much testimony to Redcentric's impressive character and credentials."

Enhanced commercial alignment
YO! Sushi can have short periods when it sees change at a dozen sites or more,

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what with openings and closures. It now has a contract that can flex perfectly to those changing needs without a heavy administrative or financial burden.

Increased reliability

Gone are the days of 72-96 hour outages; instead there is a rock-steady network supporting critical operations such as customer payments and daily sales reports, and building confidence with both customers and staff.

Enhanced data flow

Previously outages delayed the submission of vital data to head office; now data arrives on time to allow for critical analysis of guest preferences, dish popularity, revenue make-up – indeed any management information that can shape future restaurant operations.

Improved service wrap

YO! Sushi wanted a step-change in supplier quality. In Redcentric's high grade reporting and billing information, 24/7 ITIL-based support, a single point of contact for frictionless relationship management, and a solution portfolio rich in opportunity, it successfully swapped supplier for partner.