LEXEL™

NATIONAL ROLLOUT OF ICT DEVICES MODERNISES LEADING RETAILER LIQUORLAND

Specialist liquor retailer Liquorland has been operating in New Zealand since 1981. The franchise chain is now owned by Foodstuffs New Zealand Limited and has expanded to more than 120 stores nationwide. Such coverage has positioned Liquorland as the unrivalled leader in liquor retail with a franchise experience that is second to none.

The Liquorland support office provides extensive support and services to the franchised stores, including:

- Access to the Liquorland 'buying group' pricing.
- Centralised marketing and promotional services.
- Centralised ICT services and support.
- Operational support to help maintain store standards and management.
- Group membership to Flybuys and Airpoints Dollars™ schemes.

Existing requirements called for an upgrade

Liquorland had an ageing POS solution which although had performed well since its installation in 2014, was now struggling to keep up with the demands of the modern retail environment. Added to this, the system was running on the soon to be obsolete Windows 7 operating system. This made it even more crucial for Liquorland to update their POS system with a fit-for-purpose, cost-effective and scalable solution that would carry them well into the future.

In addition, the old POS solution did not use a standard operating environment (SOE), which made management and support difficult and costly to administer. Further, the old POS solution was managed and maintained by a third-party partner and their tools and support agreements were no longer meeting Liquorland's expectations.

Liquorland was also facing challenges in their backend environment. Ageing infrastructure, an operating system facing obsolescence, performance issues and a lack of scalability, represented increased risk to the company.

OVERVIEW

The need

An ageing retail POS solution and backend infrastructure was starting to impact Liquorland's ability to support their existing business requirements. A nationwide retail POS upgrade was needed across 128 sites and 376 lanes, plus a full upgrade of the backend infrastructure stack.

The solution needed to be implemented in six weeks, during Level 4 lockdown restrictions, without impacting business-as-usual.

The solution

A national device rollout to refresh the entire POS solution across all Liquorland stores. The devices selected included HP Engage Flex Pro POS hardware with 15" touchscreen monitors, USB receipt printers and 5-year onsite warranty support. The broader project also included updates to core backend infrastructure with Lexel creating a new SOE for POS and BOS PCs.

The results

- Modern and robust POS hardware that meets retail requirements now and into the future.
- Modern SOE across POS and BOS PCs to strengthen security and reduce admin costs.
- Modern core backend infrastructure to boost performance, reliability and scalability.
- All devices and backend infrastructure pre-staged and configured at Lexel to reduce risk and cost.
- National rollout completed without any impact on business-as-usual activities, on time and on budget.
- Old technology that was expensive and difficult to maintain was removed.
- Significant time savings across business operations.
- Strong ROI achieved through using Lexel's efficient, cost effective staging and rollout services.

When it came to implementing and deploying a new national POS solution, Liquorland would have faced a host of logistical challenges in rolling-out the solution themselves in-house, including:

- There would be a cost to the business through distraction of in-house staff on business-as-usual activities.

- The amount of time required to implement such a rollout exceeded the in-house resources available. Additional contract resources would be needed, resulting in increased admin overhead and cost.

- Regional partners would also be needed if a roaming team approach was not taken. Finding, engaging, training and managing these would come with significant overhead and cost.

- Concerns around how to manage on-going regional support after each site upgrade was completed or fixing teething issues was a risk for potential extra cost.

- Finding the physical space to pre-stage and configure all the evices was challenging.

- Concerns around maintaining physical security and asset tracking prior to site delivery or implementation was a concern.

- The need to implement new processes or systems to execute the project successfully was both a risk and an overhead.

With all of this in mind, Liquorland decided that partnering for the project would provide them with stronger outcomes and at a lower cost, relative to running it as an internally resourced project. Liquorland then put out an RFP to market for a partner to both supply and deploy a complete refresh of their POS hardware and software solution throughout all of their stores in New Zealand.

> " The new HP POS solution will stand the test of time for Liquorland. These devices can do everything Liquorland requested and more. "

Finding the right solution

Liquorland chose Lexel Systems to design and implement a new retail POS solution across their entire franchise network. Experts in national deployments of ICT devices, services and support, Lexel were well-placed to take on a project of this scale and ensure it would be achieved with minimal disruption of day-to-day operations.

After performing initial site inspections to gain a full understanding of typical store environments, Lexel began designing the plan for Liquorland's national rollout of POS equipment and infrastructure. The scope of the project involved the procurement, warehousing, configuring, consignment shipping and installing of the POS solution to every one of the 128 Liquorland stores in NZ, then sustainably disposing of the old POS equipment.

Content with how their existing HP POS system had performed over the years, the retailer had no hesitation to again select HP for the project. As part of the RFP, the selected POS solution would feature the HP Engage Flex Pro POS with a 15" touchscreen monitor, USB receipt printer, HP scanner and 5-year onsite warranty support.

"The new HP POS solution that was selected will stand the test of time for Liquorland. These devices can do everything Liquorland requested and more," says Lexel Procurement Services Manager, Troy McCallum.

Lexel was also engaged by Liquorland to create a new standard operating environment (SOE) for both point of sale (POS) and back of store (BOS) PCs, to update core backend infrastructure such as servers and storage. Modernising and standardising both the front and backend environment ensured the new solution would function seamlessly, as well as making ongoing maintenance and updates easier and more reliable.

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Getting it right

As part of the decision process, Lexel Systems was selected for the project due to their strong national logistics capabilities, with benefits to Liquorland including:

- The ability for Liquorland staff to remain focused on business-as-usual.
- Lexel Systems' agile scale-up capabilities to accelerate the project's rollout compared to what an internal team could accomplish.
- Lexel Systems' national network of branches and contractors for last-mile services and post-project support.
- An integration centre for the pre-staging and configuration of all devices, pre-installation.
- Lexel Systems' warehouse capabilities for quickly preparing consignments and arranging just-in-time delivery to site, which avoids disruption to the installation sites and eliminates the possibility of misplacement.
- Lexel Systems' proven pedigree and reputation for executing national rollout projects of this nature on time and on budget.

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> The pre-staging and configuration services removed the risk and cost from the project. We had all equipment delivered to us first to be asset-tagged, configured, tested, documented, then packaged into consignments for delivery to each site. As per the project schedule, equipment was then dispatched directly to each site with just enough contingency delay allowed, to reduce the risk of equipment going missing or disrupting BAU at each site prior to the install technician arriving.
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As part of the preparation, Lexel worked with several stores that were used as pilots to test the proposed deployment process, which had first been fully audited and documented, to provide a proven framework for the full national rollout. With such a tight time frame to deliver to it was imperative for the Lexel team to identify any unforeseen risks or scenarios in advance.

Lexel's project management and device rollout experience were key to the success of this large-scale deployment. Working closely with the Liquorland team, Lexel's Project Management Office ensured all deadlines and project milestones were adhered to and achieved. Every device was master-imaged and custom pre-configured, before being shipped out in complete instalment consignments to each store. Onsite installation and migration then took place early in the mornings, so as not to disrupt trading hours and inconvenience customers visiting the stores.

"The pre-staging and configuration services removed the risk and cost from the project. We had all equipment delivered to us first to be asset-tagged, configured, tested, documented, then packaged into consignments for delivery to each site. As per the project schedule, equipment was then dispatched directly to each site with just enough contingency delay allowed, to reduce the risk of equipment going missing or disrupting BAU at each site prior to the install technician arriving." - Lexel Field Services Manager, Stephen Arnott.

The challenge of unforeseen circumstances

Undertaking this mammoth rollout across 128 sites and 376 lanes was no mean feat. Carrying it out when the country was in Level 4 lockdown due to COVID-19, presented additional challenges around logistics and worker safety. Nevertheless, Lexel was able to successfully complete the project in the record time of just six weeks.

Lexel delivered the rollout quickly by leveraging its Field Services team, supplemented by their nationwide partner network when required. Lexel's strong national capability allowed the project to run multiple streams of deployments concurrently, even catering for relatively remote rural locations, all centrally controlled from its PMO.

Another key driver to success was Lexel's locally based 24x7 Service Desk, who has strong experience in retail POS support. The Service Desk was able to support the project with final configuration of devices and was available for any post install troubleshooting or users training queries that arose.

"We were conscious that a slow rollout would greatly compromise individual stores' ability to operate, but following our proven methodology, even in extraordinary COVID-19 circumstances, allowed us to complete the project on time and on budget," says Lexel Procurement Services Manager, Troy McCallum.

In a strong position for the future

The new POS solution allows Liquorland stores to operate smoothly and efficiently, saving both time and money. Plus, with the entire hardware and software infrastructure overhauled, other day-to-day tasks can now be carried out with ease.

Liquorland now has flexible and future-proof POS technology across all its stores, supported by a modern SOE and backend IT infrastructure, that delivers elevated levels of performance, security, and scalability.

Lexel delivered a successful national device rollout with lower risk, lower cost and faster speed than what Liquorland could do internally or other possible partners had proposed. With full hardware lifecycle management delivered by Lexel including procurement, deployment, hardware repairs and spares management, upgrades and retirements of old hardware, Liquorland is in a strong position for future growth.

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BRETT O'HANLON
IT & FINANCE MANAGER,
LIQUORLAND

"Liquorland embarked on a nationwide Point of Sale replacement rollout with Lexel Systems.

Our deadlines seemed impossible, but the retail expert team at Lexel were fantastic!

The inevitable challenges that came up with a complex project were all dealt with smoothly. The rollout came in on time and on budget. The Lexel team really get retail."

LiquorLand   hp   LEXEL™

Lexel is a New Zealand owned provider of ICT services and solutions to business. We focus on maximising business performance by using industry leading expertise and solutions to streamline IT infrastructure. Thirty years in the IT business, Lexel is a known and trusted partner.

Lexel specialise in providing solution consulting, infrastructure design, implementation, project management, outsourcing, support services and procurement. To deliver this wide range of services, Lexel Systems has partnered with the main technology providers in NZ and have secured the highest level of certifications possible with each of these partners.

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