



WORKING TECHNOLOGY THAT DELIVERS UNPARALLELED STYLE

Working Style was experiencing reliability issues with their legacy point of sale equipment that was unbecoming of a high-end fashion retailer. Through leveraging a fully managed IT service with Lexel, they now have technology that aligns perfectly with their brand and keeps their customer's information secure.

Like all good tales of New Zealand ingenuity, the Working Style story revolves around satisfying a basic human need: to have a sartorial edge over your fellow man.

Founded in 1987, Chris Dobbs began selling made-to-measure shirts door-to-door, initially to fill the time between the end of his business degree and the beginning of his career. Through doing this, he recognised you didn't need a career when you could have your own business.

Today, guided by directors Chris Dobbs, Tim Dobbs and Andrew Cole, Working Style is regarded as a 'premium' retailer in the fashion industry. Working Style has a strong heritage in selling suits, which has evolved into dynamic casual wear collections, both in clothing and footwear, across 7 locations in New Zealand.

Situation

Lexel and Working Style were first introduced to one another in 2011. At the time, Working Style was operating an outdated IT environment that began to negatively impact the retailer.

Although proactively maintained, several incidences within the span of a month highlighted it had come to the end of its economic life.

OVERVIEW

The need

Outdated, unreliable IT infrastructure and malfunctioning POS, made it difficult for Working Style to deliver an exceptional customer experience.

The solution

Lexel provides a fully outsourced and managed IT service with state-of-the-art POS systems and 7-day IT support.

The results

- New POS hardware for improved reliability
- Strong ROI
- State-of-the-art POS that aligns with the Working Style brand culture
- Fully outsourced and managed IT solution
- Streamlined collaboration with private cloud supporting Office 365
- Enterprise management and security tools to keep company-critical data secure
- Wireless-access-network that supports cloud and a distributed workforce

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“Our legacy environment which Lexel took over had 3 outages, one after the other – the firewall was playing up, a server went down on a Friday evening, and the DigiPoS blades we were using started to fail as well,” highlighted Financial Controller at Working Style, Nola Wilton.

Servicing an upmarket client base with high expectations, every component of Working Style’s operation needed to reflect this, including their point-of-sale (POS) systems.

“As a fashion company, everything we do needs to be aesthetically pleasing. We can’t have things that aren’t matching, as we are very much judged on how things look,” Nola Winton explains.

This was a challenging time for security concerns, with the threat landscape evolving at an unprecedented rate. “Security was a big reason why we engaged with Lexel. Privacy of customer data is of utmost importance, therefore ensuring the protection of our database was a high priority,” explains Nola Wilton.

Lexel, acting as the trusted advisor, guided Working Style through their options before ultimately overhauling their IT environment, which included a focus on the modern workplace where mobility, security and collaboration are key considerations.

Solution

Lexel transformed Working Style’s IT infrastructure from an outdated on-premise solution with several physical servers to a modern workplace running on a Hyper-V, Microsoft Server, Office 365, SharePoint and Skype for Business that is currently housed in Lexel’s Albany data centre.

In terms of their POS systems, Working Style’s legacy systems were DigiPoS blades running all POS lanes throughout the country. With reliability issues coupled with poor IT experiences for their retail staff, they were replaced with modern, reliable and stylish HP rp5800 retail POS systems.

To fully utilise the new environment, the Head Office received modern HP all-in-one desktops designed to leverage the collaboration possibilities available with Office 365 and Skype for Business.

“It was an overhaul which at the time, really pulled us into the 21st Century. It was a decision that took a while for us to make. It was an internal process for us to acknowledge and accept that we needed to spend the money” Nola Wilton highlights. Working Style now find themselves in the midst of another POS

replacement cycle. During this current rollout, all monitors were replaced with HP’s retail monitor line-up, to provide a standardised and appealing solution that aligns with Working Style’s brand. As a high-end fashion retailer they spend considerable amounts of money on their store layout and require all client-facing equipment to fit with their high profile look and feel.

As part of the initial change to Lexel, they also took over the 7-day support of Working Style’s POS trading systems, as well as the core infrastructure which has delivered a renewed and continued sense of peace of mind. “Number one priorities are always POS issues – the reliability of POS in retail is paramount because once something goes wrong it’s just diabolical, so having that reliability from HP and Lexel is fantastic,” says Nola Wilton.

Today, Lexel provides cloud, infrastructure, desktop and retail support for Working Style. Led by the Lexel Field Services team, it’s a combined effort from multiple Lexel business units that inevitably contributes to Working Style running at optimal efficiency, with the equipment that aligns best with their brand.

Results

Working closely with Managing Director, Chris Dobbs and Financial Controller, Nola Wilton for the past eight years, Lexel has been proud to provide Working Style with strategy and guidance that ensures their company is moving in the right direction, making the right decisions, and investing in IT in the correct manner.



Working Style leverages Lexel's "Trusted Advisor" model, where a Lexel Senior Field Services Engineer is assigned and effectively works as the customers "Virtual CIO".

The first to admit she doesn't possess a wealth of IT knowledge; Nola Wilton highlights it was imperative to work with someone she could get along with and understand. "I always recommend working with someone you get along with. Our assigned Virtual CIO Michael is usually here once a week, and always on speed dial should I need him. He's very good at juggling the requirements and over the years we've developed a very good working relationship."

"We've been very lucky that the level of explanation has always been exemplary. Anything I need spelled out, Michael and the larger Lexel team is always there to help," she added.

These are sentiments echoed by Michael, Lexel's Virtual CIO himself, who has relished the opportunity to work in the challenging realm of retail. "Retail is another whole beast, 7-day working weeks and the introduction of e-commerce really changed the landscape in terms of what retail technology requirements are. So being able to deliver HP POS hardware that is reliable from the monitors right down to the peripherals for Working Style is really pleasing," said Michael.

Future

As the working relationship between Working Style and Lexel continues to grow, the roadmap for this financial year will focus on completing their digital transformation so Office 365 can be utilised to its full potential. Currently using a selection of the components available in the Office 365 suite, Working Style will upgrade to the Microsoft 365 E3 suite, which will bring several key improvements to the company.

Windows 10 will be implemented across all personal and POS devices while advanced security and identity management tools will be leveraged to maintain a strong security posture. The culmination of this transformation will see a migration from traditional file shares to SharePoint and Microsoft Teams for streamlined document management and collaboration, including integration for retail reporting.

Implemented by Lexel to support the increased demand of cloud applications and always-on access, a new wireless access network will also be implemented to support head office and each retail store across New Zealand.



NOLA WILTON FINANCIAL CONTROLLER WORKING STYLE

"I'm one very satisfied customer. Looking back, we think we made the best decision when we moved to Lexel and we haven't looked back since."

"For us, one of the biggest benefits outside of our mission critical POS systems, is having everyone in the company working securely on the same platform – so migrating to the cloud with Office 365 has been fantastic and as we continue to work with Lexel, it will only continue to improve." Nola Wilton highlights.

When asked what advice she would give someone looking to leverage their IT in the same way, she added; "find the right partner that knows the technology, but also knows your industry. For us, Lexel was the right choice as they know their IT and they also understand the unique needs of retail operators. It's been a great partnership over quite a few years now and one that we look forward to continuing with into the future."

WORKING
STYLE



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.