



Boosting customer experience levels for Select Fashion

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IMPROVING SERVICE LEVELS WITH THE RIGHT MANAGED SERVICES PARTNER

Clothing and accessories retailer Select Fashion has significantly improved the service levels delivered to its customers across its nationwide chain of stores by fully outsourcing the administration and management of its critical databases.

Theo Odamtten, Director of Select Fashion which currently operates 108 physical outlets and an online store, explains: “We need our customers to be served quickly to avoid long queues and losing them in store. It’s all about improving the customer journey. Having reliable infrastructure is key to this – which in turn relies on good quality data.”

The Select Fashion technology infrastructure was becoming problematic and focused the company on improving till services, which were running on Retail-J PoS software. Delays with the processing of transactions, with some failing to be processed at all, were proving debilitating to the efficient running of the stores and negatively impacting customers.

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THEO ODAMTTEN, DIRECTOR OF SELECT FASHION

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Databases at the heart of the problem

Select Fashion brought in PMC for Application Support on its tills to deal with the incidents and tickets being raised. Drawing on in-depth retail knowledge and experience, the PMC team suggested many of the problems were emanating from the core database at the heart of the business.

Shaun Smith, Database Services Manager at PMC Retail, says: **“We recognised the database was part of the problem. We’re talking about the essential database at the core, to which many databases and retail operations are connected – including the likes of finance and stock replenishment. If it’s not working, there’s a domino effect across the whole business. It’s not unlike the familiar image of the swan gliding through the water, whilst below the surface there’s lots of activity.”**

A database health check was proposed by PMC, which prompted a wide-reaching conversation with Select Fashion about the existing databases. Select decided to fully outsource to PMC the administration and management of this critical aspect of the IT infrastructure. In total almost 50 different databases which impact all aspects of the retailer’s organisation.

The partnership with PMC encompasses a long-term database management agreement. There has been an overhaul of database management and the migration of a core database holding all the website data. Challenges included the handling of a legacy conversion software that had to be rewritten, according to Shaun Smith, who says: **“We reverse-engineered it to get more functionality. It’s one of multiple challenges we’ve faced and worked on to ensure the least downtime for Select Fashion’s customers. We’re always up for a challenge.”**

Theo Odamtten recalls one particularly critical situation when the company suffered a ransomware attack with which PMC was called in to assist. **“Shaun and the team were invaluable in resolving this and it helped build the relationship. We have complete faith in Shaun and the team. He’s always our first port of call if there are any issues,”** he says.

Improved security and database management

For Shaun Smith the strength of the relationship has been crucial: **“It’s key to the partnership. We’re trusted members of the Select IT team. This is worth its weight in gold when working with clients.”** This mutual trust has maximised the positive outcomes for Select Fashion. The retailer has seen considerable reduction in alerts logged for incidents thanks to the increased security, improved audit logs, and ongoing database management.

Shaun explains: **“This has led to an improved overall performance for the business as we’re aware of issues ahead of Select Fashion. We only tell them if an issue is not yet resolved. Most times we’ll have it sorted before they are aware of any problem at store-level, which keeps them up and trading reliably.”**

This high level of trust has enabled Theo Odamtten to effectively hand over the management of his data to PMC for monitoring 24/7. **“That’s 100% the case and we’re very happy with the service we receive. The quality is very good and gives me great peace of mind. When I wake up in the morning, I know there won’t be any issues. Everything runs smoothly.”**

Select is currently investigating how to move forward with some of its older infrastructure for both stores and online. PMC is actively involved as this work includes the phasing out of old PoS hardware, and there are decisions to be made about the long-term plan for applications running on tills.

PMC retail expertise will ensure Select Fashion is able to make informed and effective decisions about databases and the broader technology infrastructure - to ultimately deliver the best experience for shoppers.

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