



Digital technologies take customer service to the next level

Client name: Horizon Retail Solutions

Location: Lewisville, Texas

Industry: Retail

Challenge

- Help retailers innovate to deliver exceptional customer service
- Develop, deploy and service applications that help farm supply retailers deal with competitive pressure, product complexity and compliance
- Control costs for software projects in light of IT budget constraints

Solution

- Adopt a more customer-responsive platform that can integrate the latest digital technology, including cloud, mobility and AI
- Maintain, enhance and support POS software at 120 retail stores
- Introduce agile methodology, help desk and application life-cycle support

Results

- Tools for retailers to leverage multichannel solutions, respond to market challenges and access information from anywhere
- Ability for Horizon to more rapidly deliver new applications and respond more quickly to change requests
- Delivery of enhancements to point-of-sale and e-commerce systems; new firearms compliance app; 700+ trouble tickets cleared

If you've visited a Family Center Farm & Home store in Missouri recently, you've undoubtedly noticed you could shop the aisles for canning supplies and craft sodas, get your utility vehicle serviced, pick up a saddle you had ordered online — and when you hit the checkout, have everything rung up in one smooth transaction.

You may have also noticed special buy-one-get-one offers and customer loyalty coupons delivered to your mobile device. And it's never been easier to navigate Family Center's website, no matter where you are or what device you're using.

Those are just some of the digital advancements that Horizon Retail Solutions has already delivered to Family Center and other customers through a partnership with DXC Technology. Looking ahead, Horizon plans to further enhance its mobility offerings, move hardware to the cloud and unleash the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

Horizon is a boutique software company with a unique business model — it focuses exclusively on developing, deploying and servicing applications for farm supply retailers. It is owned by its customers, the retailers themselves, so keeping them satisfied is the one and only priority of the business.

“For a lot of companies, success is measured by the bottom line,” says Chris Smith, chief information officer at Horizon Retail Solutions. “At Horizon, we measure success by how well our customers work with their customers. If our customers are able to maintain growth and keep their customers satisfied, that makes us a good company.”

Farm supply retailers face a variety of challenges. There's competitive pressure from online retailers like Amazon and from “big-box” retail chains. There's a high degree of complexity when the product mix includes clothing, tools, fencing, animal feed, hazardous materials, and large bulk items such as riding mowers and stock tanks. In addition, many of these stores sell firearms, which creates an additional level of recordkeeping and compliance responsibilities.

Partnering to take on bigger challenges

Horizon is in close, daily contact with its retailers, which have made it clear that they want to use the latest technology to improve their customers' experience. As a small company with limited resources, Horizon looked for a partner that could lead its digital transformation efforts.

“We chose DXC as our alliance partner for digital transformation because of their breadth and depth of experience,” says Horizon CEO Don Corwin. “They bring innovation to the table every day.”

Horizon began working with DXC Technology 3 years ago on a small project. “We succeeded on that one, we expanded to a larger project, and now we're doing major work together,” Corwin says. “DXC and Horizon have been able to blend

“Our customers are benefiting from this digital transformation by being more competitive with online and larger chains. They’re able to address their consumers with a single touchpoint, whether the consumer buys online, goes to the tire shop, shops in the store — and then bring that all together as in a single transaction. Those are the kinds of things our customers are asking of us, and DXC makes possible.”

Don Corwin
CEO, Horizon Retail Solutions

“Working with DXC, we’ve accomplished more in the past 3 years than we had in the previous 20 years.”

Chris Smith
CIO, Horizon Retail Solutions

their teams into a single working unit. Our customers are benefiting from the digital transformation by being able to respond to the challenges from Amazon, from the marketplace, from the infusion of social media and from being required to find multichannel solutions.”

DXC’s Application Managed Service helps Horizon through every step in the application development life cycle, from development to support to release management to help desk. DXC has enabled Horizon to revamp its point-of-sale (POS) software, which provides store purchasing, warehouse management, inventory management, accounting and firearms regulation tracking.

Horizon has been able to prioritize application enhancements to accommodate requests from store owners, has improved turnaround time for new applications, is hitting deadlines, and is doing a better job of managing change requests. DXC also developed APIs so Horizon customers could integrate with other software providers for e-commerce and warehouse management solutions that are not core to Horizon. And DXC is leveraging its partnerships with key vendors to help Horizon achieve hardware and software savings.

The sheer number of completed projects is impressive: more than 180 enhancements in the IBM AS/400 RPG area, 10 major enhancements in the POS system, four major web applications, a brand-new, browser-based firearms compliance system and e-commerce enablement through API integration for three of Horizon’s retail customers.

“Working with DXC, we’ve accomplished more in the past three years than we had in the previous 20 years,” Smith says. “The partnership has been fantastic, as they are able to provide us with resources that we weren’t able to ever have before. And as a result, our software has grown immensely.”

Looking ahead to meet emerging retail trends

DXC has taken a lead role in helping Horizon and its retailers plan for the future. DXC recently conducted a 1-day session at the DXC Client Briefing Center in Plano, Texas, for Horizon and the board of directors from its customer group, covering emerging retail trends and opportunities to move to the cloud.

“In the next 3 years, we expect to adopt cloud for its resilience and ubiquitous availability, mobility to give our customers quick access to information, and AI for its ability to anticipate needs and trends,” Corwin says.

The goal is to shift hardware resources to the cloud so that retailers won’t have to buy and maintain physical servers. “Leveraging cloud technology will allow customers to be able to focus solely on their business,” Smith says. “We will provide the software and setup for those IT services, which they won’t have to do any longer.”

The reaction to these digital transformation efforts has been overwhelmingly positive. “What personally excites me is how much we’ve been able to get done in a short period of time,” Smith says. “By leveraging new technology, we’re able to provide solutions more quickly.”

In the end, it all comes down to the customer. Smith says customers are benefiting from having information available at the touch of a button. “In the past, you used to have to go back to older computers. Now, we’re able to provide instant access, whether it’s customer information, product information or information about anything; we’re able to provide that to each of their employees to give to their customers.”

Learn more at www.dxc.technology/retail

About DXC Technology

As the world’s leading independent, end-to-end IT services company, DXC Technology (NYSE: DXC) leads digital transformations for clients by modernizing and integrating their mainstream IT, and by deploying digital solutions at scale to produce better business outcomes. The company’s technology independence, global talent, and extensive partner network enable 6,000 private and public-sector clients in 70 countries to thrive on change. DXC is a recognized leader in corporate responsibility. For more information, visit www.dxc.technology and explore thrive.dxc.technology, DXC’s digital destination for changemakers and innovators.