Case Study:

Terry White Chemists freshens faces nationwide with help from PicNet

To support the launch of world-first customised skincare solution, Bespoque, (exclusive to Terry White Chemists), PicNet has drawn on its rigorous project management and technical expertise to enable the rollout of wireless access points to more than 100 pharmacies over a six-week timeframe.

Terry White Chemists is Australia's leading full-service pharmacy, with a franchise network of more than 170 pharmacies nationwide. Reporting annual turnover in excess of $1 billion, the network employs more than 5,000 pharmacy staff, with a 120-strong support team based in the Terry White Management (TWM) franchise headquarters in Brisbane.

Business Challenge

In 2013 Terry White Management created Bespoque, a world-first customisable skincare solution, that enables individuals to create a unique skincare formula that suits their specific needs. In-pharmacy touchscreen kiosks guide consumers through the process of designing and tailoring their ideal Bespoque skincare solution.

Each kiosk required internet connectivity linked to a central management system. The high cost of ethernet cabling to individual kiosks saw this ruled out as an option. It was decided in-pharmacy Wi-Fi was preferable as it offered a long-term solution that would support the flexible installation of similar initiatives moving forward.

"This was a great opportunity to set ourselves up for future low-cost data distribution throughout our pharmacies," says Rob Coulstock, technical services manager at TWM.
"However, implementing this in the short timeframe required by the Bespoque project timeline, was a key challenge."

Following a successful small-scale pilot Wi-Fi installation, TWM scheduled the rollout of kiosks to commence on 16 April 2014, with the process required to be complete by 28 May, 2014. During this six-week time-frame all wireless access points (WAPs) had to be installed and connected in preparation for the launch of Bespoque.

Due to the scale of the project, TWM employed different partners to install the kiosk hardware and software, and to provide employee training. This meant the schedule for the wireless rollout had to closely align with the schedules of the other contractors.

In June 2013, TWM engaged PicNet to equip the kiosks with wireless technology and deploy software to manage the network from its Brisbane headquarters.

"Terry White Management insisted that the pharmacy's ability to serve customers unimpeded was paramount through the rollout," says Marco Tapia, IT consulting services manager and managing director at PicNet.
"This combined with the number and geographical spread of stores involved, specific, local conditions, timetabling and variety in store layouts made the project quite a unique challenge."

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> Rob Coulstock, Technical Services Manager at TWM.

Solution Provided

PicNet tested three different WAP brands in pilot pharmacies prior to the rollout to establish which technology would best meet TWM's needs. Based on the tests, PicNet settled and proposed to TWM, that the Aruba RAP 109 WAPs create a wireless network for each pharmacy and Aruba AirWave Network Management software be installed to enable the franchisor to manage all information produced by the kiosks.

To ensure the wireless rollout went smoothly, PicNet's project manager created a comprehensive deployment timeline one month before work began. As part of this process, PicNet communicated openly with the other contractors to ensure the plan of work aligned with each outlet's installation and training schedules.

Business Benefits

PicNet's thorough project management and resourceful IT engineers enabled TWM to equip more than 100 outlets with wireless networks within the strict six-week timeframe. This allowed the franchisor to launch the Bespoque skincare line with web-connected kiosks in stores around Australia by its deadline of 28 May.

PicNet set up TWM's central management console using Aruba AirWave in February 2014, taking care to pre-configure each of the planned active points around the country. The service provider then assembled a team of seven engineers to deploy wireless networks in each of the target outlets.

Rigorous project management and flexible timetabling underpinned PicNet's capacity to meet TWM's expectations for the wireless rollout. PicNet's seven engineers worked closely to the provider's carefully orchestrated project timeline, completing between two and three outlets a day. When TWM's project milestones and schedules changed, PicNet's project manager recalibrated the rollout schedule accordingly.

PicNet's engineers displayed exceptional problem-solving skills during the rollout, taking full ownership of each installation and finding lateral solutions to problems as they arose. The engineers performed a wireless site survey in every outlet to position the WAP so that the kiosk and point of sale computers could connect to the internet wirelessly.

However, variation in store layouts meant that it was not always possible for a WAP's signal to reach each piece of equipment. Similarly, the cabling in some outlets complicated the task of connecting a WAP. In these instances, PicNet's engineers applied their technical expertise and working knowledge of the hardware to find alternative solutions, such as tidying communications panels and deploying additional hardware to boost in-store wireless signals.

> "Rather than simply sticking to the job sheet, PicNet's technicians were able to adapt to and overcome any problems that occurred," says TWM's Coulstock.

PicNet maintained constant and open communications with TWM throughout the project to ensure the franchisor's expectations and requirements were comprehensively met. After each site visit, PicNet's engineers submitted a report detailing their working processes, highlighting any difficulties and outlining potential solutions.

> "They take ownership of the situation and hold themselves accountable for making sure there's a good outcome at the end of the day," says Coulstock. "PicNet is large enough that they've got technical expertise and can deliver projects of this size, but they're flexible and small enough that the people on the ground still care about the result."

About PicNet

PicNet is one of Australia's most respected IT service providers. We have worked with many leading organisations, including Terry White, Reckitt Benckiser, Novartis, Medlab Pathology, Serco Systems/Defence Maritime Services, Wallenius Wilhelmsen, Travelex, Exchange IT, Fuji Xerox, Fremantle Media, BNG Consulting and others.

PicNet offers services ranging from software development, IT infrastructure management, project management and consulting to on-demand and support desk services. We help medium-sized and large organisations use technology to improve productivity and grow strategically.

PicNet is a Microsoft Gold Partner and an AWS Consulting Partner.

To learn how PicNet can help your business, contact Marco Tapia today at marco.tapia@picnet.com.au.