



Case Study

How TDM Group provide Long Tall Sally with a dependable IT partnership and a single point of global IT support for its retail business

Company profile

Founded in 1976, Long Tall Sally is a leading niche fashion brand. The retailer's mission is to be the first choice for tall women worldwide. Long Tall Sally currently has thirty stores in the UK, USA, Canada and Germany as well as a successful eCommerce operation, shipping to 73 international territories.

Seeking a dependable IT partner

TDM Group first became an IT partner of Long Tall Sally in 2011. Obi Khan, IT Manager at Long Tall Sally, says, "We originally brought TDM Group on-board as part of our plan to improve connectivity: strengthening it in some locations and implementing a stronger, more secure connection between our offices and warehouse sites in the UK and North America." A new requirement emerged when Long Tall Sally identified the need for greater levels of support to ensure the continuous operation of electronic point of sale terminals in its North American outlets.

The company had been originally operating in North America through catalogue and web marketing, then the Canadian assets and trade of Tall Girl were acquired, including nine stores across the country.

Obi explains, "There was unfortunately a lack of synchronisation between when coverage was needed in America and Canada, and when the incumbent provider could deliver it - during normal UK business hours only. We were looking for a dependable technology partner who could specify and implement an agile infrastructure and who would be able to provide first-class support to our North American operations, regardless of the time difference."

Recognising the value already being added to the business, Long Tall Sally invited TDM Group to define a technology solution for Canada and the US. However, the decision to award the contract to TDM Group was by no means a foregone conclusion.

"We exercised all due diligence," comments Obi. "We were looking for good return on investment from a partner who would work effectively with us over the long term. It was a major decision and it was important to get it right."

How TDM Group supports



A business-led solution

Cloud-based technology that improves business resilience by removing reliance on in-house systems

A single point of global IT support

Consolidated support for business-critical electronic point of sale systems in Canada and the USA

Improved efficiency

Accelerated first-time fix rate of business-critical technology

Transparent support

24/7 visibility of incidents and service through the SmartSupport customer portal



Balancing cost with quality

By inviting TDM Group to specify a solution, Long Tall Sally benefited from the deep experience of TDM Group's Professional Services team in defining and managing similar projects. Applying a consultative approach, TDM Group undertook an extensive review of the existing infrastructure, scoping out requirements for the future solution and identifying any risks or gaps.

Long Tall Sally was using legacy hardware that had been in use for a number of years, this needed to be refreshed and updated. With reducing costs being a key driver in the retail sector, TDM Group looked to help Long Tall Sally streamline its operations and gain the best possible return on its investment, without any compromise on quality.

Elasticity and scalability

TDM Group's proposed solution amply covered both immediate and future requirements, offering scope for growth and change for the next three to five years. TDM Group was able to recommend best-in-class technology to create an infrastructure that would provide an advanced yet cost-efficient solution, with the required scalability. Specifically, TDM Group proposed a cloud-based solution and also introduced VMware, a leading virtualisation product, as part of the solution to upgrade the technology and reduce costs. Cloud computing was a new concept to Long Tall Sally at the time and offered an affordable solution with greater business resilience. In a sector where change is the only constant, Long Tall Sally's infrastructure has the elasticity to scale up or down with changing requirements, flexing with the business and eliminating large fixed overheads.

Obi notes, "The adaptability of the new solution was soon put to the test, as shortly after its implementation we started shifting parts of the business around and consolidating our North America operations. So, for example, with TDM Group's help we could ensure that a new, smaller office was suitably set up with appropriate technology." Today, data is held on servers located in TDM Group's highly secure data centre suites, across multiple sites, and accessed remotely by Long Tall Sally users.

“ Having a cloud solution helps to meet our objectives for resilience. Rather than incurring the risk of connectivity problems interfering with service to other locations, we're running our business-critical services from a fully maintained 24/7 data centre through TDM Group.

Obi Khan, IT Manager, Long Tall Sally

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Centralised IT support

Long Tall Sally draws on the skills and certifications of TDM Group SmartSupport specialists for supporting day-to-day retail operations and sales staff in the North American stores. Behind the scenes, TDM Group constantly monitors and manages the servers supporting Long Tall Sally's cloud-based solution to pro-actively pre-empt and avert any emerging issues, such as a latency issue or a problem with an application.

Should a problem occur with a terminal, the store manager logs the incident as a ticket by phone or email with the SmartSupport service desk. A qualified SmartSupport engineer will look at the incident within fifteen minutes. The highly qualified and experienced SmartSupport team remotely determines the appropriate resolution for an in-store problem. This can consist of remote assistance or a physical on-site presence, giving Long Tall Sally a single, accountable source of support across their stores.

As a result of this co-ordinated effort, first-time fix rates have soared. While the stores can enter a sale manually if there is a problem with a terminal, doing so starts to build up a backlog of data. A prompt resolution therefore ensures the smooth flow of data on stock and sales being sent from the stores into the company's back-office systems.

Solution visibility

Obi has a holistic view of service activity, such as the volume and type of incident, given to him through the SmartSupport customer portal. This gives him clear visibility of TDM Group's service levels and overall performance.

He comments, "It was an adjustment for me at first, to step back and let TDM Group share the responsibility, but it works well and we have good processes in place. I can get a deeper level of detail, should I wish." In the course of the past year, TDM Group has also taken on responsibility for the maintenance and management of Long Tall Sally's UK infrastructure.

Obi says, "Over the months, we've built a strong relationship. At our regular review meetings, we're able to discuss our objectives and TDM Group pro-actively suggests potential solutions and technology that will help us to develop our infrastructure.

Together, we constantly look for new ways to streamline the way we work together and we're gradually asking TDM Group to take on more - our head office phone systems being one example. This gives us a single port of call for any queries."

Find out more

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