

Case Study: Timpson Ltd

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the most valuable
system for us”

Sara Honey, Timpson Ltd

You may not know Timpson Ltd by name, but you will certainly recognise their stores. With a network of 575 outlets throughout the UK, Timpson offers a diverse range of services – from key cutting to engraving and dry cleaning. Key to their success is fully operational machinery and well stocked stores – faulty machinery or no stock equals no revenue. Timpson needed to manage this large estate of stores effectively from a central location. Planet from Qube Global Software provided the perfect solution, and now they would be “lost without it”, claims Sara Honey, Timpson’s Help Desk Manager.

Timpson’s estate is managed by a central Help Desk team run by Sara Honey, responsible for running the help desk, planned and reactive maintenance, machine refurbishments and monitoring stock items throughout the stores.

Sara faced several urgent business pressures from management. One of these was to reduce the downtime of essential machinery, which disrupted the daily running of the stores and cost the company money. Effective planned and reactive maintenance and careful stock control of machinery spare parts were essential to achieve this. There was also an urgent need to streamline and speed up the process of handling thousands of calls from stores UK-wide. Sara purchased the Planet G5 facilities management system in 1997 to provide the framework for efficiently managing the 330 stores, 300 contractors and 17,000 assets they were responsible for. Management of calls and jobs improved significantly.



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In 2003, Timpson acquired the Mr Minit group of shoe repair outlets, which doubled the Help Desk team's workload overnight. Further efficiencies were required and an upgrade to Planet seemed the obvious choice. It offered many additional features and a more userfriendly interface. A trial system was set up to test the additional features and fully evaluate the system. Sara was very impressed – especially with the system's new search and filter facilities – and purchased Planet FM in 2003.

Since installing Planet, the Help Desk team has found it very easy to use, and the system has now become central to everything they do.

Planet's Help Desk module has enabled Sara's team to cope effectively with the increased volumes of work. When logging a call, users are prompted to enter the appropriate information and select from drop-down lists of standard faults, descriptions and actions. This minimises typing, eliminates errors and cuts the time taken to process each call. Service requests are logged then automatically emailed to relevant contractors for action within preagreed service level targets. Users can check that calls haven't already been logged, avoiding costly duplicate callouts or sending out unnecessary parts. In the last year, the Help Desk handled 2189 call outs, requested 2732 parts for machinery and ordered 5000 display items.

Sara also needs to provide regular expenditure information to Regional Managers. Planet provides this information quickly and painlessly, eliminating lengthy preparation time. Reports can be automatically produced at regular intervals and then emailed or faxed directly to managers for an instant snapshot into how their budget has been spent.

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The Help Desk team plans to manage stock control and purchasing using Planet. As stocks deplete, the system prompts users to place an order for more supplies, and automatically produces an order which is sent directly to the relevant supplier. This system is ideal for requesting spares for machinery and they plan to use it for stock display items too. The whole process is automated, speeding up the turnaround time, and ensuring minimal store disruption.

Timpson now uses Planet as a comprehensive centralised information system. The costs associated with store refits will now be maintained in Planet so that managers can track the costs of display items. They also plan to allow warehouse staff to close work orders when parts are despatched to branches, increasing the scope of the system outside of the traditional Planet team.

"I have used Planet since it was installed, and it has become the most valuable system for us" explained Sara Honey. Planet is now fundamental to the smooth running of the department. Sara continued, "Planet is worth its weight in gold", and all Sara's team agree. Originally set up with 6 users, there are now 9 full-time users of the system. Planet has totally transformed the way in which they operate, continued Sara, "It easily stores all our information, and the advanced search facility makes our lives so much easier... Altogether, it's brilliant!"

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