Mobile phone retail processes and expertise packaged in a box

Carphone Warehouse is the largest independent telecommunications retailer in Europe with over 2,000 stores and 10 million subscribers across 8 countries.
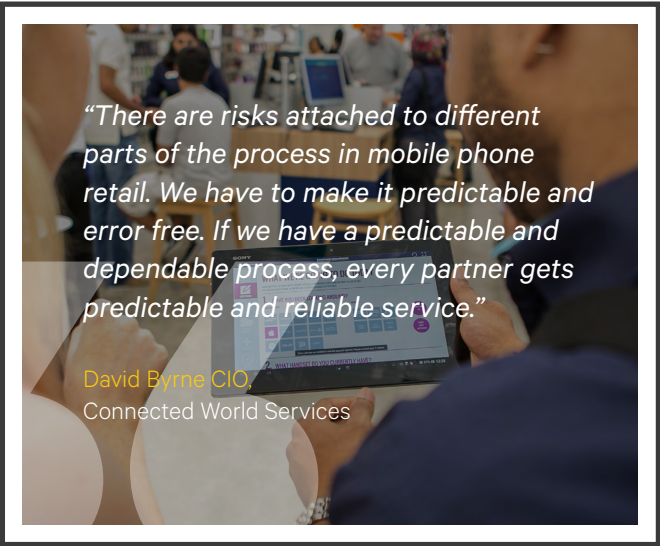
In addition to its retail activities, Carphone Warehouse Europe already provides managed services to a number of businesses in relation to mobile phone insurance and technology solutions.

Connected World Services

Connected World Services is a B2B division of Carphone Warehouse, providing knowledge of mobile phone retail to business partners. The specialist skills, operating processes and technology that underpin the mobile phone retail business are encapsulated and provided to third parties looking to develop their own connected world solutions.

"We see Connected World Services as enabling retailers, original equipment manufacturers and network businesses around the globe to leverage all the expertise and processes that we have built into our operations over the last 24 years," says David Byrne, CIO of Connected World Services.

"Previously we took people from our business and had them work in the partner business. We thought about a way to make it more efficient. This is where Connected World Services fits, to put the know-how into business processes packaged as the Connected World Services product," says Byrne.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Process that arrange the retailer's commission for selling customers a mobile network and billing ran on different IT systems
- Thousands of scripts running every night
- Homegrown scripts created to try to solve the problem

AUTOMIC SOLUTION

- System of record to capture transactions
- Predictable and dependable retail processes
- Ability to operate over heterogeneous platforms

CUSTOMER BENEFITS

- Predictable and dependable retail processes
- End-to-end visibility across business processes
- 100,000 lines of code cut from systems
- SEPA compliant ahead of Feb. 2014 deadline

"There are risks attached to different parts of the process in mobile phone retail. We have to make it predictable and error free. If we have a predictable and dependable process, every partner gets predictable and reliable service."

David Byrne CIO,
Connected World Services

One Process, Many Systems, Multiple Platforms

Some of the Connected World processes use systems in Carphone Warehouse's data centers, which perform the reconciliation of the retailer's commission for selling the customer a mobile network contract and billing on behalf of networks.

These processes run on different IT systems. "We started thinking about how a business process running on a Unix system could be passed to another part of the business process running on Windows Servers and decide what to do," says Byrne.

Carphone Warehouse runs hundreds of thousands of scripts every night, so automating processes is a priority. When the company first started automating processes, "the automation tools available could not operate over heterogeneous platforms," according to Byrne. So the retailer had to write its own software to support this functionality.

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Single Automation Platform

Carphone Warehouse has now replaced its homegrown scripts with Automic Workload Automation, which Byrne says has allowed Carphone Warehouse to cut over 100,000 lines of code from its systems.

Predictable and Error Free Processes

Selling a phone to the public requires selling both a device and a network contract. The business processes are wrapped up in custom IT that Carphone Warehouse has built up. But, as Byrne explains, there is no off-the-shelf enterprise resource planning (ERP) that provides a system of record to capture the transactions. The process of the sale of a handset and a mobile phone contract is handled in bespoke batch-based systems. "There are risks attached to different parts of the process in mobile phone retail. We have to make it predictable and error free," says Byrne.

"If we have a predictable and dependable process, every partner gets predictable and reliable service," says Byrne. "In addition, any improvements to the business process only need to be deployed once to benefit all partners."

SEPA Compliance

Carphone Warehouse is also using Automic Workload Automation to achieve SEPA (Single European Payments Area) compliance in advance of the February 2014 deadline. Automic now automates the direct debit collection process.

This puts Carphone Warehouse ahead of the pack when it comes to SEPA compliance. According to Experian, the leading global information services company, only 30 per cent of credit transfers and two per cent of direct debits were SEPA compliant with just one year remaining before the SEPA 2014 deadline.

"Automic has enabled us to cut over 100,000 lines of code from our systems and provides much more visualization than we had before."

David Byrne
CIO, Connected World Services
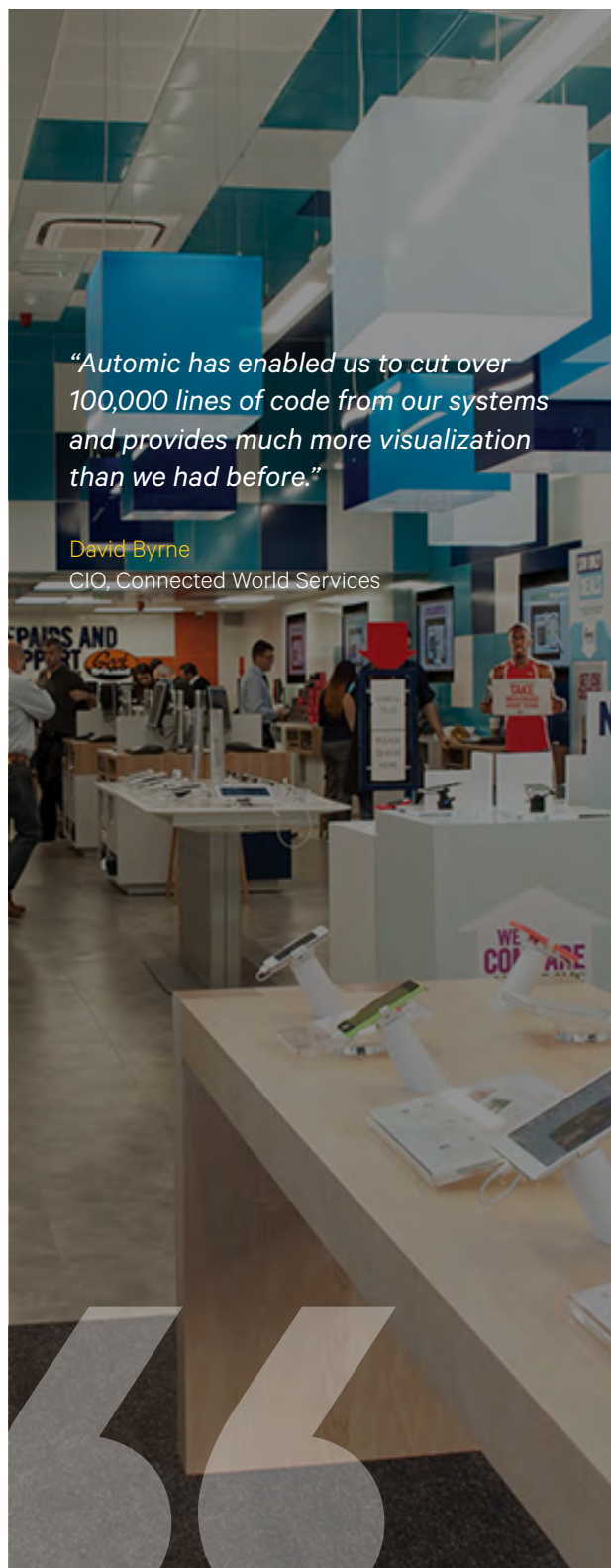
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