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UK'S LARGEST CONVENIENCE AND NEWSAGENT CHAIN GENERATES RETAIL AGILITY FOR CUSTOMER CONVENIENCE.

Martin McColl adopts Azzurri's RAN service across 1300 stores.

Weybridge, UK, June 25 2008 – Martin McColl Ltd, the country's largest chain of convenience and newsagent stores, has entered into a 5-year fully managed service agreement with Azzurri Communications, adopting the Retail Application Network (RAN) across its 1300 stores, headquarters and partner sites.

The £4 million contract will see Martin McColl radically modernise its IT infrastructure with a fully managed Wide Area Network (WAN), designed to reduce costs, consolidate existing and new applications and improve customer services across the organisation.

Through its acquisitive growth strategy, Martin McColl required a new communications infrastructure to provide a faster, more consistent service and create a network that could scale with the future growth of the business. Neil Hodge, General Manager, IT at Martin McColl explains:

"We struggled to unify our services and keep up with new technology and needed to modernise our systems to help us to keep pace with the constantly changing demands of our customers. We looked to integrate all our applications and services onto one single platform to support our increasing consumer services. Azzurri's dedicated RAN service was designed to do exactly that"

Rolling out a new EPOS platform to all its stores to automate its services, Azzurri's RAN will support all Martin McColl's critical applications including sales and stock management, integrated IPCCTV, multimedia and web based applications for training, reporting, store communications and time management.

The RAN will also provide secure connectivity to third party partners including Martin McColl's merchant acquirer, E Top-up provider, gift card supplier and utility payment partner to ensure consumer services such as mobile phone top up, household bill and Council Tax payments made in store are as fast, safe and convenient as possible.

Hodge continues, "Across our convenience, newsagent and post office facilities, we are constantly striving to improve consumer services in the community, and it's critical our technology acts as an enabler not an inhibitor. With Azzurri's RAN model we aren't tied to one single carrier or technology, meaning the network can flex and change with our business needs. The RAN ensures we can keep pace with technological advancements by constantly adapting our technology to our customer needs throughout the life of the contract."



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The RAN is designed and perfectly tuned to cost efficiently deliver managed transaction services and critical operational applications for high street/multiple operators like Martin McColl. Once in place, the RAN will increase the speed of network processing at Martin McColl, reduce the cost per transaction and other ongoing operational expense. With real-time information available Martin McColl will also be able to improve stock management, which will help increase customer satisfaction. This will enable the business to improve customer service and look to add further value through its technology.

Moving forward, Martin McColl plans to advance the use of technology to allow for greater interaction with the consumer, and is looking to extend the use of its RAN by adopting exciting new applications such as IP streaming into its stores.

The roll-out is due to be completed in April 2009, and, Azzurri is radically reducing the cost of deployment through its zero-touch implementation strategy. As the new EPOS system is implemented across the Martin McColl's retail estate, each store can simultaneously plug in a router, previously configured by Azzurri, which will automatically download the specification for that individual store. This innovative automated process allows Martin McColl to install the routers as part of a single EPOS installation visit, removing the time-consuming and costly requirement for dedicated engineers to be present at each of Martin McColl's stores during implementation.

Jason Standerwick, sales and marketing director at Azzurri comments, "By utilising managed services for the core networking infrastructure, multiple retailers like Martin McColl are able to achieve greater value from existing assets, focus on critical business processes and respond rapidly to a changing environment. The RAN model is built precisely to deliver this type of agility."

ABOUT AZZURRI COMMUNICATIONS, www.azzurricommunications.com

Azzurri is transforming the way organisations use communication and information technology. We are a leading managed services company delivering flexible voice, data and mobile communications. Ours is one of the largest independent network management and support teams providing converged solutions that are no-longer tied to technology and supplier. Azzurri Communications was formed in June 2000 and is headquartered in the UK, offering global access to sales, service and support to customers in 130 countries.

ABOUT MARTIN McCOLL, www.martinmccoll.co.uk

Martin McColl is the country's leading neighbourhood retailer operating over 450 convenience stores and 850 newsagent stores throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Martin McColl operates around 450 Post Offices, delivers newspapers and magazines daily to over 200,000 homes and has annual takings of over £1billion. The business recently boosted its convenience store estate with the acquisition of 92 Smile stores in the West Country.

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