

Panacea's top to toe care prevents disaster at Murrays



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Applying Technology to Business



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Peter Vanstone
Managing Director,
Paul Murray plc

In 1962 Ernest Murray founded Murrays, selling white coats and overalls to pharmacists from his home in Winchester. Today, the family owned firm of Paul Murray PLC is the UK's leading distributor of Pharmacy Sector Sundries with a turnover of £10 million and 90 staff based at Chandlers Ford in Hampshire. Their own product range of nearly 3000 lines includes such popular brand names as "Murrays" manicure, "Head Girl" haircare products, "Junior Macare" baby products, and they have sole distribution rights for Miners cosmetics.



CASE STUDY

Managing Director, Peter Vanstone puts Murray's success down to the strengths of their branding, a very focussed market place and their partnership with Panacea. "We have been with Panacea since 1989, support has been very, very good. Hardware support is fantastic and the knowledge within your Tetra software support team is excellent. Problems get prioritised sensibly - when your back's against the wall, they get things resolved quickly. We would not want to use anyone else - Panacea do exactly what we want in every area, support, sales and administration. All elements are very well run."



Panacea's relationship with Murrays goes back to the days when they were running Tetraplan (Tetra's first variant) on a Fortune (early Unix) box. Murrays were very dissatisfied with their existing supplier and carefully evaluated four companies in great detail. "Panacea stood head and shoulders above the others, in terms of being able to offer us the complete package we needed." recalls Peter.

Lasting, Scalable Technology

Murrays grew fast and were upgraded to Chameleon and an Altos machine in 1989. More recently, in 1994, with more users and greater demands on disk space and speed, Panacea recommended and implemented an IBM RS/6000 and CS/3. The implementation was smoothly project managed, went in on time, on budget and with no downtime. "We have not had to endure too many upgrades over the years because the systems Panacea recommend tend to last; they really understand our business and what we want to achieve and they help us get there, step, by logical step. We are never pushed into buying things we don't need." explains Peter.

Paperless Working Environment

Today, Murrays have 22 sales reps, spanning the UK, who take orders from pharmacists via hand held computer terminals which then feed back orders

to the CS/3 system at Chandlers Ford. The orders are then processed and passed to the warehouse automation system for hand held terminal picking based around bar coded scanning. There is no paperwork produced until the CS/3 system produces the final invoice. 150 orders a day, placed on 3000 different product lines are delivered by carrier to customers, within 48 hours of ordering.

From the brink of disaster ...

Peter recalls the day in August 1998 when their RS/6000 was stolen. "I remember standing in a draughty room at 8.00 a.m. in the morning. I was calling Panacea to tell them that our RS/6000 had been stolen. Before mid-day a replacement machine was up and running, before 5.00 p.m we were fully restored to back up - that's what you call service."

"Luckily, Panacea had sent us a technical bulletin about the importance of backups and how to carry them out - and we had carried that advice out to the letter, so restoring the data was a simple exercise."

... to confidence in the future

Today, Murrays are confidently facing the future and in particular, the millennium date change. "Panacea support staff are helping us carry out a complete date test on a system identical to ours. We will soon know about any problems we are going to encounter as we roll the system through the date change; though I am confident we won't find any."

Peter has seen the future in a demonstration of Panacea's e-commerce solution, AMERIGO and says that they are likely to adopt an AMERIGO solution to further develop their web site. "We are beginning to think about E-commerce, but are not being forced into it by Panacea. We will take that step when it's the right time for our business and our customers and we know that Panacea and AMERIGO will be there to help us make that step and support us when we are ready."

Murrays put a high value on relationships with both their customers and suppliers alike. When asked if he would recommend Panacea, Peter simply replies "We wouldn't go anywhere else."



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Panacea Limited, Winton House,
Winton Square, Basingstoke,
Hampshire, RG21 8EN

Tel: (01256) 305050

Fax: (01256) 305030

Internet: www.panacea.co.uk