Storm Technology
Microsoft Business Technology Consultancy
Case Study - Topaz
Turning the tables at Topaz

“We operate in a tough competitive market. To win we need to do things differently. For Topaz our difference lies in how we treat our customers. Our Microsoft Dynamics CRM solution, designed in partnership with Storm, is the central backbone that helps makes that happen.”

Liam Mulcahy Commercial Director, Topaz

Introduction:

Topaz is one of the best known brand names and businesses in Ireland. Everyone knows Topaz and is familiar with what they do - they are retailers selling fuel, lubricants and non-fuel products to thousands of customers every week nationwide.

As a company, Topaz is made up of multiple divisions that serve the needs of a diverse range of customers with an extensive portfolio of products and services.

The organisation operates in a highly competitive market sector and staying ahead of the game demands product innovation, exceptional service and most of all a dedicated focus on the customer.

“We work in a cut-throat market sector. Our competitive strategy is to make our customers front and centre of our business. Our challenge has been to find a way to make it easy for our people to do this given the breadth and depth of our business” explains Liam

Strategic Issues

Like many businesses, Topaz operates a divisional structure. At the highest-level there is retail and commercial sales, finance, marketing and customer service. Drill a little lower and many of the divisions are divided further into products, services, regions and customer types. Each division operates with relative independence and often different divisions have different systems, solutions and processes for engaging with customers and managing on-going relations.

For Topaz a key strategic issue hindering growth was the inability to get a cohesive view of customers’ relationships with the organisation across the entirety of the business.

“Our challenge was that at no point in time, could anyone in the company easily get a cohesive view of the collective interactions any customer had with our business” explains Liam “This was not good for our business or for our customers”

This disjointed approach was impacting Topaz’s growth and was evident in many ways – for example:

- Customer satisfaction was impacted as customers felt no-one really fully knew their business or understood their account
- Sales opportunities were missed as there was no collective view of what customers had bought or where an upsell opportunity might exist
- Productivity was not being maximised as staff tried to manually cobble together the customer insight they needed to drive engagement, retention, service and sales

“Our business has lots of different divisions, systems and processes but to our customers we are simply Topaz. From their perspective we are one company and when they contact us we should know all about them. They are right to expect this and our mission is to deliver this for them” comments Liam
**Turning the Tables**

For Topaz it was time to turn the tables and look at things differently. It was time to move away from a siloed, divisional view of customers to a holistic, enterprise-wide view that would provide the business with insight and understanding into all of its customers and all of their relationships across the entirety of the organisation.

Fundamental to achieving this was the design of a company-wide customer relationship management (CRM) solution that would become the central nervous system of the business.

“Being able to have a cohesive view of our customers was something we all knew would strategically help our business. What we didn’t know was how to achieve it. We were no strangers to CRM systems – most divisions had one - but from what we could see they were far cry from the strategic customer centric solution that we were looking for” comments Liam.

“That changed when we talked to Storm Technology. It was really only then that we got insight into the full extent of what a great CRM solution could do and how Microsoft Dynamics CRM could really support our business strategy” explains Liam.

**The Story Told**

From a playing field of many, Topaz chose Storm Technology as its partner to take its vision of a cohesive view of the customer and make it a workable reality.

“There are many CRM consultants in the market and everyone we talked to had the technical expertise to do what we wanted done. But we needed much more than just a technical solution and that is why we chose Storm. The team were clearly talented in the strategy of CRM as well as technically astute about Microsoft Dynamics CRM” comments Liam.

“But most of all we were impressed with their approach and attitude – they always found a way to make things work despite the complexities around the project. We always felt that they were there with us, part of our team and as committed as we were to getting things right”}

For Storm, the starting point in helping Topaz was to get deeply ingrained in the business. Working directly with each division and stakeholder to understand first-hand how they needed to engage with a CRM solution, how it could be designed to improve existing processes and ultimately what they wanted to achieve from the overall project.

“Storm never managed the project from a purely IT perspective – they managed it from a business and user perspective and that got it off on the right track from day one” explains Sharon Butler, CRM Project Manager, Topaz.

The project challenges were many but there were four key areas that were fundamental to success:

- Managing a cultural change for the business – from divisional led CRM projects to a business wide CRM strategy
- Significantly changing end user behaviour – staff entrenched in doing things one way needed to change and adopt a new way of working.
- Overcoming a complex legacy environment – information from multiple sources – including two ERP systems, multiple spreadsheets, shared drives, diaries and personal PCs – had to be collected, correlated, cleansed and integrated
- Inclusion of an external customer service partner – part of Topaz’s customer service function was outsourced and the CRM solution needed to include the partner as a key user and stakeholder.

“It was a complex project but the way Storm managed it helped ease some of the pressure. Communications were always straight-forward and frank. They earned our respect by not always giving us the answer we wanted but always giving us the answer that was right for the business” comments Sharon.

“But most of all, we were genuinely in it together - Storm and Topaz – and there was a real collective passion to make it work”.

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What’s different today?
Topaz’s company-wide CRM solution, built on Dynamics CRM, is now used across 10 divisions, by 70 staff and the company’s outsourced customer service partner. It is used by the retail sales teams, the commercial sales teams, customer service, the loyalty and fuel card call centres, finance, order logistics and by the various product divisions with marketing on the roadmap for roll-out.

On average around 7,000 customer activities are recorded by internal teams each month with a further 5,000 customer service interactions being logged by Topaz’s outsourced partner.

The impact has been extraordinary:

• **Improved Customer Engagement** – the Topaz team, from sales to service, are much better equipped to engage with customers in a way that really reflects the business and its customer focused strategy. At the tip of the finger, staff have insight into all they need to know about a customer to help, support and service them better

• **Increased Revenue** - Visibility into customer product portfolios provides the sales teams with the information they need to up-sell and cross-sell appropriate additional products driving new revenue opportunities for the business

• **Enhanced Customer Service** - A consolidated view of all interactions, cases and incidents enables Topaz to spot trends in customer feedback so they can take action accordingly to improve the service they give to their customers

• **Improved Productivity** - Centralised information, streamlined processes and easy to use interfaces enable staff to simply work smarter

“The impact on the business has been immense and we know we still are only part way down the path. But it’s a journey we are committed to continuing with Storm as our partner of choice” concludes Liam.

The Future Unfolded
For Topaz this is the start of a journey not the end. The business is fully committed to continuing to develop its customer focused strategy and its Microsoft Dynamics CRM solution to support it.

“Storm has opened our eyes to how CRM technology can truly support our business strategy and how Microsoft Dynamics CRM can make that come alive. The project has been extraordinary – it’s changed what we do, and how we think.

“We set out on this journey because we really believed that knowing our customer is strategically central to our success. The CRM solution designed and implemented by Storm is the backbone of that strategy. It allows our staff to do what they want to do – and that’s service our customers better” remarks Liam.

“Commercially it’s paying dividends too – the customer insights we now have at our finger tips enables us to drive improved customer satisfaction and increased sales”
About Storm Technology

Storm Technology is a leading Microsoft business technology consultancy that specialises in building solutions to help clients gain better value faster from the investments they have made in Microsoft technologies.

To find out more simply visit our website – www.storm.ie or give us a call.

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