

UNIQLO provided with backbone infrastructure and local expertise to support growth



“We are currently undergoing a period of expansion beyond our home country, into regions where we previously had little footprint. There is the potential for a degree of disconnect between our branches in these regions and HQ, but working with NTT ensures that on both a business and technology level we remain connected. Infrastructure backbone is key for our growth strategy.”

Cedric Allix, CIO, Fast Retailing
France



Background

UNIQLO, Japan's leading clothing retail chain opened its first store in 1984 and has since rapidly expanded with over 1,000 stores globally.

Its first store outside of Japan was opened in 2001 in the UK, and then later in 2007 into France and Russia in 2012. UNIQLO is continually expanding in the regions as well as Asia and the US.

Objectives

As it looked to expand in Europe, UNIQLO needed an IT partner to help put in place an infrastructure which matched its ambitious growth plans. It therefore required not just a supplier, but a company that understood the European market place and local business culture, combining that knowledge with technical ability. As a global company, it needed a technology provider with a proven network that could match its ambitions across the world. UNIQLO needed a provider that it could work with from stage one, building the technology infrastructure into its stores as they were constructed.

Challenges

UNIQLO faced a number of challenges in expanding its presence in Europe. Geographically removed from its headquarters and store building team in Japan, it also had to contend with numerous different ways of doing business in Europe and the Far East at every level from senior executive down to store manager. Overcoming the local issues was almost as challenging as connecting its European operations with HQ in Japan and others areas such as the US. NTT Europe was already operating in both cultures effectively, with local abilities and market knowledge, and helped UNIQLO to operate as a single global company.



“ Working with NTT from the ground up means that the infrastructure we now use fits our specifications perfectly and will also help us expand in Europe. We have also benefitted immensely from its local knowledge, invaluable when starting up in a new market day.”

Cedric Allix, CIO, Fast Retailing France



Solution

NTT Europe provide fully managed systems and infrastructure and was involved in the physical construction stage of the flagship store in Paris, UNIQLO's European HQ. This included installing low voltage infrastructure and wiring to help deliver telephony and office infrastructure systems, as well as an IP infrastructure, connecting in-store monitoring screens and security cameras. A full communications infrastructure, including WiFi, an uninterruptable power supply, IP service and firewalls for the 400 staff based at the Paris HQ was also installed. To support this and maintain network communication with other shops in Europe and HQ in Japan, UNIQLO makes use of NTT's data center in Paris.

In the UK, NTT delivered infrastructure services for all of UNIQLO's shops and offices, and following the success of its work in Paris, has been involved in the Moscow flagship store construction.

Benefit

NTT Europe provides UNIQLO's European operations with a complete technology infrastructure that gives it the bandwidth to expand as required, whilst maintaining direct contact with key departments in Japan, including the store building team. Over 2,500 UNIQLO employees use systems installed and managed by NTT Europe.

As a Japanese company with a strong European arm, NTT Europe was ideally placed to help smooth the way for UNIQLO to expand into Europe.

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