

Case study – ChoicesUK

The Natural Choice

ChoicesUK is one of the UK's leading home entertainment retailers. Established in 1985, the company employs over 2,000 people nationwide. It has more than 200 retail outlets, offering DVD movies for sale and rent, together with videogames, games consoles and mobile phones. It also offers mail order through ChoicesUK Direct, while carrying out fulfilment for other mail order retailers. It has an online store, ChoicesUK.com, and trades as a franchise in convenience stores through ChoicesUK Local.

“We were looking for a product that worked, was reliable, regularly updated and easy to use. QAS ticks all those boxes.”

Graham Lyden,
Director of Information Services at ChoicesUK.



Situation

Originally founded as Home Entertainment Corporation, the company re-branded to ChoicesUK in 2006. With its growing business and emerging channels for interacting with customers, ChoicesUK required a data management solution to improve and maintain the information it holds on customers.

Back in 2001, ChoicesUK was using two separate customer management systems. One was used for its fulfilment business, to ensure that goods ordered were dispatched to the correct address. The second was used for the mail order and online businesses, to get accurate address data every time someone registered with the company as a new customer, either over the phone, by post or online.

ChoicesUK was aware that some deliveries were not reaching their destination and, although not quantifiable, the company believed that having two separate systems created lots of inefficiencies. ChoicesUK also felt that its existing address management solution had a number of limitations.

Firstly, when a postcode was entered, it did not offer all the potential delivery points under that postcode, which meant staff could not identify situations where a caller had given them an incorrect house number or incomplete address. More importantly, the system could not be migrated from the existing Unix platform to a Windows platform. This was significant, as ChoicesUK was looking to use the system in conjunction with a Microsoft Navision CRM system. As a result, they began to investigate the alternatives.

Solution

ChoicesUK selected QuickAddress Pro from QAS, a solution that ensures accurate address data is captured at source, improving business efficiency and customer service.

“Having looked into suppliers, it was clear that QAS was way ahead of everyone else in terms of integrating its solution into a third party application,” says ChoicesUK’s Director of Information Services, Graham Lyden.

In addition, ChoicesUK also bought QuickAddress Batch, a solution that cleans and verifies addresses against QAS’ enhanced version of Royal Mail’s Postcode Address File (PAF). This enabled ChoicesUK to clean and maintain its customer database of over two million people. By using QuickAddress Batch to enhance address data captured in-store and map it to correct names, it was also able to improve its marketing activities. This was essential at a time when the company wanted to educate its customers about its re-branded image.

Then in 2003, when ChoicesUK was introduced a new EPOS system into its retail stores, it took the opportunity to bring in further address capture products from QAS to enable store staff to accurately capture customer address details in the most efficient manner possible.

“Unlike a lot of traditional retailers, we need to regularly capture address information,” says Lyden. With many of its DVDs and videogames being available to rent, ChoicesUK required a system that could capture and verify a customer’s address details at point of entry to safeguard its rentals.

“Before we introduced QuickAddress, we had no address management solution in-store, so we had lots of badly-formatted, poor quality address data. Introducing QuickAddress enabled us to capture much better-quality data, first time.”



Results

Since ChoicesUK introduced QAS software in 2001, it has come to rely on it to ensure the accurate capture and maintenance of customer address data.

“We never question the data.” says Lyden, “If we can get the postcode, we have absolute confidence in it being the right address.”

The company has found that QAS software does its job quickly and efficiently, without creating any issues. Quarterly data updates are quick and easy to install, and the update process does not require any additional maintenance overhead.

“We have never had an update that has caused us any problems, which I think is pretty unique in the software industry,” says Lyden.

The commercial teams also benefit greatly from improved data accuracy. “We can confidently extract specific data – such as customers who have rented but never purchased a product – and deliver targeted marketing campaigns to them.”

ChoicesUK also use QuickAddress Mailsort to obtain postal discounts on its marketing and brochure mailings. “QuickAddress Mailsort allows us to organise our outbound mail with the minimum effort to claim available postal discounts.”

Future Plans

Having seen first hand the business benefits that QAS software offers, ChoicesUK also introduced QuickAddress Pro in its finance department in order to guarantee the quality of address data when setting up new customer accounts.

The company is also looking to work with QAS to suppress the names and addresses of customers on their database who have passed away, moved house, or registered with the Mailing Preference Service.

ChoicesUK also intends to extend its data quality strategy by deploying QuickAddress Pro Web on ChoicesUK.com to improve accurate and complete address capture on the web.