

## The onesys case study – How things have changed...

**Established in 1972**, onesys (One Systems), its employees, products and services have been playing their part in the process of migrating UK PLC from an inefficient manual system to a more hi-tech networked system that will ensure that we stay ahead in the global business race.

onesys **MD Richard Knowles**, his 25-strong team and their 300 or so clients, have seen many changes over that period. And although it has been a struggle to convince the bulk of UK businesses to embrace IT and automation to the full, the evidence of climate change and the dramatic rise in energy prices have re-emphasised that only the use of technology, combined with a changed mindset, can bring the efficiency savings required to deal with the challenges ahead.

In the early days of onesys, a **central position** and a suitable address / premises was all that mattered. It was simple for staff to get to work by public transport, or park their cars. Then public transport became erratic and inconvenient, people took to their cars, towns and cities came to a standstill. Parking spaces were at a premium and visiting clients became very time-consuming.

onesys decided to **move out of town**, to cheaper premises with easy access to the motorway network. Employees had further to travel but the roads were clear and fuel affordable. The rural setting made the drive to work more enjoyable. Their central position made it easy for their staff to visit clients all over the UK. Sales, installation, training, support, were all done by car or plane.

Slowly the motorways were beginning to clog-up and an increase in clients and prospects meant that they had to **work smarter**. Then the environmental debate started and the evidence was getting hard to ignore. The increases in fuel duty made everyone think twice about car travel. onesys increased the use of technology to decrease their overheads and environmental impact.

Although **personal relationships** are still very important in business, more and more people are getting comfortable with and see the advantage of doing business by phone or online. Customers in general have experienced the time and cost-saving advantages of sourcing products and services remotely, rather than in person by meeting up or visiting a supplier. It is a cheaper way to source and trade, resulting in better value for the client and it reduces their carbon footprint.

At onesys technology is used for the benefit of all. Modern communications and IT equipment enables their **marketing team** to find new prospects and supply them with digital product and service information by means of the telephone, email and their successful web site. This saves on printed advertising, brochures, travelling to trade fairs, exhibition stands, client visits, etc.

Their **consultants** can advise on and demonstrate software tools online, via telephone and broadband connections. Unless a client insists, or it is more appropriate to do this in person, a visit will not be necessary, thereby reducing CO2 emissions from car, train and plane use.

Many **software installations** can be done remotely as well, again saving unnecessary travel. Fortunately in most cases the software is so intuitive that external training is not required. Online tutorials and webinars (web-based seminars) are used for the more in-depth training. In cases where additional training is required, their trainers will travel to the client, so interruption at their end is kept to an absolute minimum.

Their **software developers** are used to letting the technology 'speak for itself' and some may even prefer it that way. They are instrumental in the improvements that drive onesys forward. Most work remotely and a mixed office environment could even be detrimental to their productivity. Some client contact is inevitable but this tends to be very infrequent.

Nowadays onesys rarely get involved in **hardware installations** but in the past they have offered clients the responsible removal of old equipment and materials whenever possible.

In general, **client-support** is provided by phone or online, as most queries and issues can be resolved remotely. This is quick and benefits both the client and onesys. In certain instances it may be desirable to meet up and this helps to build a stronger relationship between both parties.

The **management team** also makes full use of technology and home working. This is encouraged throughout the company. It has dramatically reduced their business and commuter mileage. Meetings are kept to a minimum and only arranged if telephone and email are inappropriate. Telephone and online conferencing will gain in popularity but the lack of familiarity in the UK means that this will be a slow process. The high fuel prices will make such alternatives attractive.

Even though their client-base and **workload have grown** over the years, the use of technology has enabled onesys to become more productive, profitable and reduce waste wherever possible. Their team hasn't grown much but by working smarter and harder, they have reduced the impact their business has on the environment.

**Home or remote working** in the UK involves only about 10% of the work force and just doubling that figure would have a huge impact on fuel consumption, traffic congestion and the environment. It would also help with skilled staff retention, reducing overheads and it could have other job and work specific benefits. Management could offer it as an alternative to a salary increase, as workers spend on average 8 hours per week commuting. Working from home would equate to a 20% salary increase and this doesn't take into account the fact that many households run 2 cars to facilitate the commute to work. Selling one car would save another £5-£8k per year and it would benefit the environment, reduce congestion, etc, etc. One of the reasons this has not taken off is the fear of management that they will lose control of their staff but this just requires a new management style. Giving employees targets and a stake in the business (e.g. profit share) would ensure their continued productivity and remote monitoring is very easy to implement.

Accurately **measuring productivity** and profitability has been (is) a problem for businesses and managers in the UK. The 'what can be measured can be managed' style of management facilitates a more flexible approach to work but many SMEs have manual data management systems in place that don't give a real-time detailed overview of productivity and profitability. One of the software modules sold to Professional Services Businesses by onesys, Sage Coretime, enables managers to control and monitor the workforce and jobs/ projects in real-time. It is networked and web-enabled, so it can be accessed remotely, which facilitates multi-site and home working.

**Know-how** and other software such as ERP, (integrated systems) enables onesys to streamline the whole business process for manufacturers, processors, distributors, etc, thereby reducing waste. onesys have recognised that businesses can have a detrimental impact on our environment but they also feel that the know-how and technology that they promote, supply and support, has and will continue to enable their clients and onesys to improve their carbon footprint.

Let onesys help **you** become more efficient. Your investment will benefit all of us in many ways.

**onesys**

01423 330335

[info@onesys.co.uk](mailto:info@onesys.co.uk)

[www.onesys.co.uk](http://www.onesys.co.uk)

