

Case study

Westcoast empowers resellers with quotation tool



Westcoast provides HP iQuote to speed the quotation process and aid hardware, software and services configuration

Industry

Technology

Objective

Provide resellers with a self-service, web-based tool to accelerate the quotation of hardware, software and services whilst reducing pre-sales enquiries

Approach

Identified an on-line business tool developer and piloted the solution for HP before full worldwide deployment

IT matters

- Offers an efficient self-service portal for resellers to create quotations, lowering turnaround times significantly
- Acts as a hardware configuration tool, accelerating the ordering process and reducing errors and multiple quotations

Business matters

- Supported an increase in monthly quotations, reducing workloads by lowering pre-sales enquiries
- Maintains a three-hour Service Level Agreement (SLA), ensuring customer satisfaction
- Helps pre-sales specialists focus on high value solutions, boosting quotation value by 40 per cent
- Facilitates the sale of HP servers to small businesses, increasing market share
- Enables further growth, increasing monthly sales revenue



“With resellers using HP iQuote we’ve managed to transform our quotation and configuration processes. This solution has been so successful, HP has rolled it out to all distributors across Europe, the Americas and soon the Asia and Pacific region and it has become the HP global sales tool for configuring servers, storage and networking.”

– Paul Harman, enterprise group and software commercial manager, Westcoast Ltd

WESTCOAST

HP quotation and configuration tool inspires resellers

Westcoast Ltd, a leading wholesale supplier of IT products, provides HP iQuote to help resellers create quotations and configure IT solutions. Pre-sales’ workload fell by 50 per cent but monthly quotation value increased by 40 per cent, whilst maintaining a three-hour SLA. This has led to Westcoast increasing revenue and improving market share significantly.



HP iQuote increases quotation value by 40 per cent

Challenge

Seeking lower turnaround times

The wholesale distribution of IT solutions to resellers, retailers and office product dealers operates in a highly demanding and competitive business environment. Whether the customers of wholesale distributors require simple or complex IT solutions, clients expect quotations in hours rather than days. After placing an order, they also want distributors to deliver the correctly configured products rapidly.

Wholesale distributors therefore constantly seek tools to lower quotation turnaround times, aid hardware configuration and reduce the length of the pre-sales enquiry process, which releases sales specialists' time for more important sales duties. Satisfying stringent Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to maintain or boost customer satisfaction and increasing quotation value, margins, revenue and market share whilst supporting rapid business growth were the main challenges faced by Westcoast Ltd within this diverse market sector.

Westcoast Ltd

Westcoast Ltd, a major HP distributor, is a leading supplier of IT products to the computer reseller and retailer networks within the UK and Ireland. Established in 1984, the company offers advanced hardware and software solutions as well as creative credit, logistics and marketing services to over 5,000 customers. Its customer base incorporates large commercial resellers, well known high street stores and established system integrators serving the public, retail, corporate and small-to-medium business sectors.

Based in Theale, near Reading, and operating regional offices in Dublin, Glasgow, Milton Keynes and Nottingham, Westcoast's portfolio spans the computing spectrum from desktop PC and notebook products to high-end server, storage, networking and printing solutions, as well as consumables and peripherals. As an HP distributor, it offers a comprehensive range of HP server, storage and networking solutions.

Not surprisingly, the company's data centre and disaster recovery facility are equipped with a modern, highly scalable server and storage environment based on an HP Converged Infrastructure containing HP ProLiant server blades. Microsoft® Hyper-V forms the virtualisation platform while HP Networking solutions link all offices and provide core and edge connectivity at each site.

Over the last 12 years, the business has grown substantially with turnover exceeding £1 billion in the last financial year. The Sunday Times consistently ranks Westcoast in its Top Track of the 100 largest privately owned UK companies and Europe's 500 lists the business tenth in the fastest growing private European companies.

"About three years ago as we entered a period of rapid growth, we experienced a considerable increase in the number of quotation requests from both existing and prospective customers," explains Phil LeBlond, enterprise group technical manager, Westcoast Ltd.



“We required a more effective way to process quotations for resellers especially those needing servers with customised configurations for the small-to-medium business sector. Our pre-sales specialists were spending far too long involved with the pre-sales process of small, single instance servers rather than focussing on larger and more complex HP infrastructure solutions, and resellers wanted a self-service approach to speed up their response times,” continues LeBlond.

“We wanted to empower customers with a quotation and configuration tool for Servers, Networking and Storage by shifting to a self-service capability,” states LeBlond. “We simply couldn’t jeopardise customer service by increasing our quotation SLA to accommodate additional growth. HP also recognised the importance of this problem within its reseller partner community and asked us to pilot a new tool in development by channelcentral.net.”

Solution

Web-based solution evolves

After a successful pilot which introduced a series of improvements, the tool evolved into HP iQuote, a managed cloud-based service that resolves the problems associated with the provisioning of complex, rules-based sales quotations that also aids the hardware configuration process.

“We helped channelcentral.net to develop this solution and regularly suggested modifications to enhance its capabilities. Resellers now have a choice. They can access our hosted copy or deploy it on their own web site,” reveals LeBlond. “With resellers using HP iQuote we’ve managed to transform our quotation and configuration processes. It’s a powerful addition to our existing on-line tools. This solution has been so successful, HP has rolled it out to worldwide distributors and it has become the HP global sales tool for configuring servers, networking and storage.

“After deploying HP iQuote, the number of quotations generated and entering our system has risen dramatically while maintaining our three-hour SLA even when our pre-sales personnel become involved,” says LeBlond. “Empowering our salesforce to generate their own quotes has allowed us to achieve a much better service to our customers and as a consequence increase revenue significantly. Handling this number of quotations with our existing staff level would be impossible without HP iQuote.”

Multi-module solution

HP iQuote comprises seven modules which simplify and accelerate the quotation, configuration and ordering process for resellers. The solution incorporates a configuration, price and quotation manager as well as an inventory export and performance manager. A message centre facilitates communications between HP iQuote users.

“iQuote is a real time saver. It has all the compatible options in one place, which helps to ensure accuracy and provides optimal performance for our customer’s requirements,” declares Ian Starling, account manager, Netteam Consultants Ltd.

Customer solution at a glance

Application

Hardware configuration
Quotation generation
Order placement

Software

• HP iQuote

HP services

• HP Cloud Services

While seeking a quotation, resellers simply select an HP server, storage, networking, desktop, laptop or workstation solution, configure, export and send a validated list of requirements to their chosen supplier. If they approach a wholesale distributor such as Westcoast that hosts HP iQuote, the reseller benefits from real-time stock and pricing, shopping cart integration and distributor promotions. With resellers using this intuitive self-service facility, they eliminate the generation of multiple quotations which could potentially frustrate their customers, leading to lost orders.

“To help resellers maximise margins and increase revenue while offering better customer service, our business development managers provide a comprehensive training programme to help the resellers’ sales forces use HP iQuote,” adds LeBlond.

Benefits

Pre-sales enquiries fall while quote value climbs

Today, approximately 400 Westcoast customers employ HP iQuote generating over 4,000 quotes per month. The quotation and configuration tool provides the company’s UK and Irish resellers with a highly efficient and error-free self-service system for placing orders, frequently without involving Westcoast personnel.

“After deploying HP iQuote, the value of quotations generated and entering our system on a monthly basis has risen by 40 per cent while maintaining our three-hour SLA. By empowering our salesforce to confidently generate their own server quotes we have freed up our pre-sales experts to work on more complex HP infrastructure solutions.”

– Phil LeBlond, enterprise group technical manager, Westcoast Ltd

A dedicated portal for Westcoast servers helps the resellers focus on HP ProLiant server sales while direct feedback to channelcentral.net drives continuous improvements of HP iQuote.

“iQuote allows us to quickly and accurately build server solutions while providing the correct solution first time, at the best price for our customers,” says Colin Weeks, technical director, itQED Ltd.

“Although we’ve seen a dramatic increase in the number of quotations generated, the quantity of pre-sales enquiries handled by our pre-sales specialists has fallen by 50 per cent while the quotation value managed by the team has increased by 40 per cent,” comments LeBlond. “Sales personnel no longer experience excessive backlogs and they don’t create customer service issues due to incorrect configurations or recommendations.

Rising market share and revenue

Westcoast has also found that HP iQuote is helping an increasing number of resellers to drive sales of HP ProLiant servers, HP Storage and HP Networking solutions to small-to-medium business users although many of them do not have an active salesforce.

“Following the introduction of HP iQuote to empower the smaller businesses, we’ve seen monthly sales revenue grow by 100 per cent and our market share within the HP CDP managed sector increase. This impressive performance benefits both our organisation and HP,” concludes LeBlond.

Learn more at
hp.com/go/iquote

Sign up for updates
hp.com/go/getupdated



Share with colleagues



Rate this document

