



Mobile IT cases: mobile IT solutions for customer service agents.

Miele sets the standard for durability, performance and user-friendliness – not to mention energy efficiency, design and service – of premium household appliances as well as solutions for business and the medical field. One integral component underpinning its sustainability-focused product philosophy is the maintenance provided by its award-winning after-sales service team. To ensure high service quality, Miele's technicians need the right tools and replacement parts – but also mobile IT cases. And for many years, these cases have been supplied by Bechtel to sites across the globe.

Starting point. The “Forever Better” brand promise, which company founders Carl Miele and Reinhard Zinkann printed on their first machines, still shapes the company today. The highest quality standards are not only important at every stage of a product's lifecycle, but also apply to the speed and reliability of customer service – from repairing an appliance to maintenance services. Customer service technicians use mobile IT equipment to carry out specially developed PC error diagnostics and to document and bill services rendered. The specially designed case includes a notebook, a direct thermal printer and a mobile payment system, which is updated every four years in line with technological advancements and changing requirements in the field. The IT service centre at the headquarters in Gütersloh has central control for the 47 sales units worldwide.

Project objectives. The 40-page requirement specifications document for the latest generation of cases is the first to take into account the feedback of service technicians on all five continents. The Bechtel IT systems integrator in Bielefeld, which had already been supplying the previous model in Germany, was awarded the contract following the invitation to tender for the global rollout of around 2,000 IT cases. Because the company operates globally, its equipment must be adapted accordingly. For example, notebooks must be supplied with the appropriate keyboard layouts or country-specific IEC plugs. In addition, the different software images of Miele's international subsidiaries had to be installed individually on the hardware. And even though there is considerable diversity within the company, procu-

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Miele & Cie. KG

rement and maintenance processes had to be supported by a globally consistent solution. "This will enable Miele to offer the same high level of IT support in all markets – a global standard for a global player," says Henning Landschreiber, Key Account Manager at Bechtle.

Process. During project implementation, the partners were able to fall back on established cooperation structures as well as new client management services from Bechtle. Individual software pre-loading of notebooks was carried out at the Bechtle IT systems integrator's distribution point in Bielefeld. Thanks to a direct data line to the customer's data centre, large batches of notebooks were readied within just a few days, with Bechtle employees supporting the process on site in Gütersloh. Final assembly and configuration of the case components were also carried out at two locations. "We were impressed by Bechtle's combination of efficient, central processes and ability to make adjustments quickly and easily," says Vitali Wolf from the Central IT Infrastructure Department at Miele. When it came to shipping, the most economically and ecologically advantageous route was chosen. Henning Landschreiber: "In Germany – where we delivered 800 new cases to service engineers – the rollout was largely carried out by us directly. Internationally, Miele transported the cases itself by aircraft or ship."

Solution. The latest IT case is based on tried-and-tested hardware and software components. As with the previous model, Miele opted for a Lenovo notebook. Weighing just 1.8 kg, the high-performance, rugged 14" ThinkPad T430s meets all the requirements for service use. Acting as a mobile computing and data centre, the ThinkPad performs precise diagnostics, records the services provided and also facilitates invoicing. Technicians use the other key components of the case to document the service call quickly and efficiently. For instance, the ultra-compact Brother PJ-623 direct thermal printer – weighing barely 500 g – prints by heating specially coated thermal paper, eliminating the need to carry other consumables such as ink or toner. Service reports and invoices can be printed out in the standard A4 format while on the customer's site, thereby completing the customer-facing aspects of the service call. The Bluetooth-enabled PJ-663 is earmarked for Miele's next case upgrade, since it will allow for even easier data transfer to and from mobile end devices.

Business benefits. Forever better – Miele does justice to its company motto, even when procuring the IT tools needed for its field service work. Purchasing a standardised solution from a single supplier offers considerable improvements in terms of costs. Not only does it result in lower prices due to larger order quantities, it also eliminates the work associated with submitting separate purchases for each international subsidiary. Furthermore, management and maintenance of the equipment is significantly easier. "After all, everyone knows exactly what's inside. Instead of maintaining a multitude of different components, we can establish efficient services for all cases," explains Vitali Wolf. These include Bechtle's global swap service, which guarantees Miele an immediate replacement when a case is sent in for repair. Addressing another benefit, Mr Vitali adds, "Miele employees around the world work with the same equipment, promoting the exchange of experience and helping us to continually develop both our IT equipment and our customer services."

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The Miele logo consists of the word "Miele" in a white, serif font, set against a red rectangular background.

Miele is the world's leading supplier of premium household appliances for kitchens, laundries and floor care. In addition, Miele supplies dishwashers, washing machines and tumble dryers for commercial use as well as appliances for the preparation of medical instruments and laboratory equipment ("Miele Professional"). Founded in 1899, the company has eight production sites in Germany and one plant each in Austria, the Czech Republic, China and Romania. Sales in the 2013/14 financial year amounted to around 3.22 billion euros – about 70 percent of which was generated outside Germany. Miele is represented in nearly 100 countries by its own sales companies or through importers. The fourth-generation, family-run company employs 17,660 people worldwide, 10,411 of them in Germany. Its headquarters are located in Gütersloh, Germany.

For more information, please visit:

www.miele.de

OUR PARTNER:

The logo for Brother features the word "brother" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it, the phrase "at your side" is written in a smaller, blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for Lenovo features the word "lenovo" in a bold, black, lowercase, sans-serif font. To its right, the words "FOR THOSE WHO DO." are stacked vertically in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, each word within its own red rectangular box.

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