

Case Study

Hillier Garden Centres

Customer	Hillier Garden Centres
Location	14 sites across the UK
Requirements	A solution to facilitate a new corporate wide retail network, whilst also allowing for future technology
Equipment	Excel Cat5e Cable, Excel Cabinets, Excel Fibre

Customer's View "We now have fast, reliable connectivity across the 14 Hillier Garden Centres, allowing us to track our sales transactions seamlessly. More than this, we now have much stronger stock control and more detailed accounting information meaning we can manage and grow our business far more efficiently."

Mark Pitman, Operations Manager, Hillier Garden Centres

excel
without compromise.

Hillier Garden Centres are all about successful gardening. Through their network of 14 garden centres across the UK, they promise to bring customers excellent quality plants and trees which will yield fantastic results in their gardens.

The company needed a new corporate wide retail network to help improve communications across their stores and to help them track information better. They also wanted to allow for future technology such as IPCCTV, VoIP and IPTV, and not just concentrate on their present needs. The improvements required all the EPOS tills, hand-held devices, servers and PCs to be connected via a Wide Area Network (WAN), allowing the business to track all sales transactions, along with stock control, accounting and all other necessary day to day activities.

The Right Partner

To fulfil all their requirements, Hillier needed to find the right partner. They needed someone who had the right expertise and who could give them exactly what they wanted. Therefore they chose Switchnet Systems Ltd to help them install their new infrastructure. Established in 1996, Switchnet Systems is a leading Networking Services Integration company, specialising in the development of network, from the ground up. Through their experience, knowledge and expertise, Switchnet Systems can offer a flexible, scalable network that will grow with a business.

Sourcing The Products

Understanding all of Hillier's needs, Switchnet Systems recommended Excel products, which they sourced from one of the largest cabling infrastructure, networking and physical security solutions distributors, Mayflex. Excel offers a high quality range of products suitable for virtually any application. To complete the project successfully, a range of Excel products were used, along with LevelOne switches and Motorola wireless. Excel Cat5e cable was used for the wireless APs, as well as the PC and EPOS till connectivity. This product was the perfect choice, and it comes with a no nonsense 25 year warranty programme.



Each of the 14 sites has a central communications rack, and a few of the sites have a separate remote rack connected with fibre cable. Excel fibre was chosen again. This high quality product is versatile and is backed by a 25 year product and application warranty. Excel cabinets were also used, which are innovatively designed with ease of use and aesthetics in mind.

Challenges

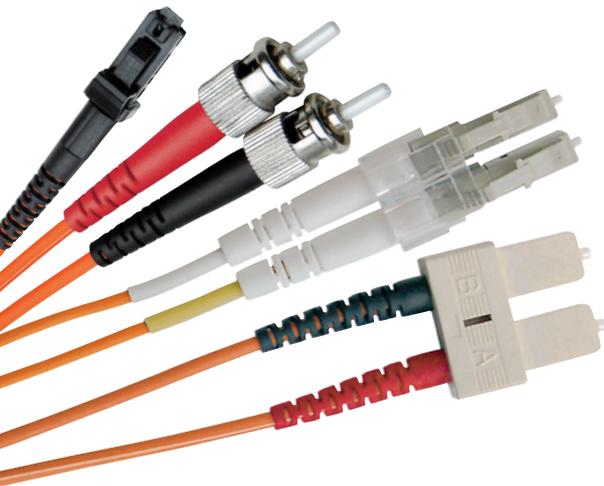
Because of the size of the project, the team faced many challenges throughout the installation. For starters, all installs had to be completed during normal office hours meaning that work had to be carried out around customers and staff. This created many issues, such as disruptions to the project and health and safety problems. Other challenges were that many of the sites have external display areas, where cabling had to be installed, and there were many remote buildings that required either fibre or external UTP, which caused difficulties for Switchnet Systems.

A total of 450 ports were installed between December 2008 and February 2009, and despite the challenges faced, the project was completed on time and to budget, and Hillier Garden Centres now have full connectivity across the 14 sites.

The End Result

Mark Pitman, Operations Manager at Hillier, is very pleased with the outcome. "We now have fast, reliable connectivity across the 14 Hillier Garden Centres, allowing us to track our sales transactions seamlessly. More than this, we now have much stronger stock control and more detailed accounting information meaning we can manage and grow our business far more efficiently. The flexibility this new system has brought is fantastic. We are also pleased that as part of this project we have planned for the future, allowing IPCCTV and VoIP to be installed easily whenever we require it."

Thinking about both their present and future requirements has given Hillier Garden Centres power at their fingertips. Having full control over their accounts and opening up the possibilities for the future means the business will be able to grow far more easily.



European Headquarters

Excel House
Junction Six Industrial Park
Electric Avenue
Birmingham B6 7JJ
England

T: +44 (0) 121 326 7557
F: +44(0) 121 327 1537
E: sales@excel-networking.com

www.excel-networking.com

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