

“Fujitsu has changed the customer experience for the better, while also improving the user experience. Our POS Application provider ensures we meet PCI compliance standards across the estate.”

Peter Newth
Technology Portfolio Director
EE

When EE set out to transform its in-store experience, it turned to long-term partner Fujitsu to image and deploy thousands of PED-enabled tablets for an improved customer journey.

At a glance

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Telecoms

Founded: 2010

Website: ee.co.uk

Challenge

EE wanted to transform the customer experience by moving away from fixed point of sale and introducing mobile devices equipped with every tool an employee needs. It needed to complete the conversion of 613 stores within a tight timeframe and without disruption to operations.

Solution

EE turned to long-term partner Fujitsu and together they planned a three-year migration, culminating in an intense three-month store conversion phase. Fujitsu pre-imaged thousands of Fujitsu STYLISTIC Q616 tablets to meet demand.

Benefit

- Reduced transaction times and increased customer conversion rates
- All stores are now fully PCI-compliant
- Each tablet equips agents with key tools, including sales, coverage inspection, model selection and contract signing, for seamless transactions anywhere
- Enabled a technology refresh allowing EE to remove thousands of end-of-life devices

Customer

Founded in 2010 as a joint venture by Deutsche Telekom and France Télécom, before being acquired by BT in 2016, EE is the largest mobile network operator in the UK, with 29.6 million customers and the largest operator of 4G services in Europe. EE's 4G & 2G networks' combined coverage reaches more than 99% of the UK population, with double speed 4G reaching 80%. The company has 613 physical stores across the country.

Products and Services

- 3,500 x FUJITSU Tablet STYLISTIC Q616
- FUJITSU Professional Services
- FUJITSU Project Management

Transforming the customer experience

EE initiated a strategic programme to change the face of its retail estate. It wanted to enable a new, mobile way of working and interacting with customers by moving away from the traditional fixed point of sale approach.

"A fixed point of sale is a physical barrier between our agents and the customers and, as such, feel outdated in today's wireless mobile age. By removing them and introducing comfy sofas, we hoped to transform the customer journey," explains Peter Newth, Technology Portfolio Director, EE. "There was also the issue of PCI compliance, which some of our old software couldn't meet, providing an additional reason to overhaul our stores."

With 613 stores spread across the UK, the challenge was in transforming each outlet without disrupting business. Fujitsu has provided in-store technology support for EE for years and was ideally placed to help design and carry out the transformation programme.

"Fujitsu is a trusted partner, which knows the estate, the business and the people well so it made sense to invite it to take a lead in this project," continues Newth. "Importantly, the Fujitsu team has experience in upgrading store technology in and around business hours."

Flexible, mobile EPOS

EE decided to replace 600 of its 1,200 physical points of sale with wireless, PED-enabled tablets, supplied by Fujitsu. The FUJITSU Tablet STYLISTIC Q616 is a 2-in-1 that provides the perfect balance of mobility and performance. It has a fanless, compact design and toughened glass that protects the 29.5 cm (11.6 inch) anti-glare display. Flexible input options like keyboard, pen and touch enable EE staff to handle business routines in the most efficient way possible. The devices and servers were then pre-imaged by a 12-man Fujitsu team.

"As this was the first time we had used tablets as EPOS devices and because onsite timelines were so tight, we wanted to do as much as possible offsite," continues Newth. "So, all the configuring and imaging took place at Fujitsu. This meant we could turn over each store more quickly."

EE and Fujitsu began with a number of pilots to fine-tune the process, gather user feedback, test usability and resolve teething issues. They then gradually ramped up to migrating 15 stores per night. The pre-configured technology was installed, networked and tested while old tills were removed, and sofas brought in.

This ambitious programme enabled all stores to be migrated within three months, following two years of planning and design. The importance of a hard finish was underlined by the fact that EE's existing payment services contract was due to end.

"The pace of the deployment was a tough ask but running multiple deployment teams in parallel was well managed and really paid off," says Newth. "Fujitsu collaborated closely with our POS application provider, which supplies our new compliance-friendly PED software, and had a responsive, multi-channel approach that enabled us to solve issues quickly."

Fast, seamless transactions

Now, each EE agent has all the tools they need, including sales, coverage inspection, model selection and contract signing, on one ergonomic, robust device. Customers no longer need to be led to a desk to complete a sale and can get all the information they need to make the best choice from anywhere in the store. This is expected to both reduce typical transaction times and boost conversion rates.

"Fujitsu has fundamentally changed the customer experience for the better, while also improving the employee experience," comments Newth. "At the same time, our POS Application provider ensures we meet PCI compliance standards across the estate."

The project has also served as a technology refresh, enabling EE to remove thousands of end-of-life devices from an aging estate and replace them with the new Fujitsu tablet, future-proofing the EE stores for several years. Furthermore, 613 stores were successfully migrated out of hours without disrupting operations within a tight timeframe, thanks to the careful planning and design carried out by Fujitsu and EE.

"This was an open, collaborative project with shared goals and a real sense of co-creation through true partnership," concludes Newth. "None of it was easy, however, Fujitsu rose to the challenge each and every time."

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