



CASE STUDY

Harding Retail



About FluidOne

At FluidOne, we are proud to be an award-winning Connected Cloud Solutions provider that's consistently achieving one of the highest Net Promoter Scores (NPS) in the industry. Our own national fibre network, Platform One, underlies each of our services and is the most connected network in the UK. Our services cover connectivity, SD-WAN, cyber security, IT & cloud managed services, mobile & IoT, UCaaS and CCaaS.

We design tailored solutions to help each of our customers and partners digitally transform their IT and communications. We combine the services of our specialist partners in cyber security, IT managed services, and UC with our unparalleled connectivity to create multi-cloud and multi-connected environments that are secure and safe for them to use.

About Harding Retail

Harding Retail works in partnership with 20 of the world's top cruise brands.

Founded in 1930, the company provides an on-board retail shopping experience of the highest standards. The Harding Retail portfolio includes over 250 shops on over 60 cruise ships.

Hybrid Hosting Offers Plain Sailing for Harding Retail

Bristol-based cruise ship retail giant Harding Retail is the on-board retailer for 20 cruise companies including P&O Cruises, Carnival, Royal Caribbean International and Cunard, across 64 ships. Their 250 shops stock fine jewellery, fashion, beauty and liquor, with world-class brands such as Dior, Cartier, Gucci, Omega and Barbour, among others.



The Challenge

With major new contracts in the pipeline which will see additional retail units added to new cruise fleets, it's important that their business is in the best possible position to be able to support this increase in business.

They have therefore worked to align their business strategy and IT strategy to optimise their efficiency and responsiveness. This includes outsourcing their hosting and server management to make it less time-consuming and more easily scalable.

Harding Retail previously had servers on-site, which they managed themselves. This, however, was becoming quite time-consuming. Their new strategy involved moving all servers to a hosted environment to increase security, offer flexibility and provide scope for future expansion. The option for a managed solution from FluidOne also enabled them to free up their IT team's time to work on other more business-focused projects.



The Solution

In order to carry out Harding Retail's new strategy, we took on the management of their servers and moved them off-site, utilising a hybrid hosting model.

Harding Retail also run their business intelligence (BI) platform on the private hosted servers. This provides them with valuable data for their sales and finance teams, enabling them to plan and monitor stock levels across the business and make business decisions accordingly. With their retail outlets serving over 4.8 million customers per year, this BI environment is critical to the running of their vast operation, and needs to be secure, resilient and scalable to meet both current and future business needs.

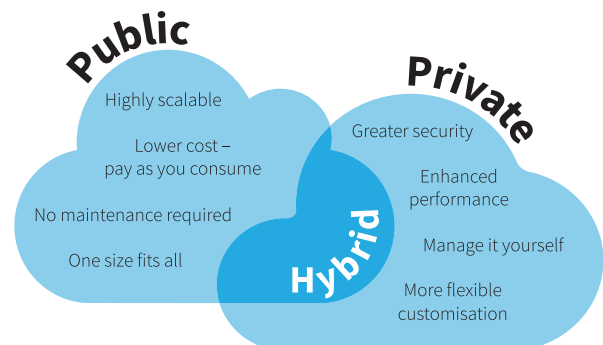
This hybrid model uses a combination of both private and public hosting to meet the specific requirements of different areas of the business.

Public Hosting

The other 5% of their servers, which are used as a testing environment, were moved to Azure's public platform. This offers them a fast, flexible option with a "pay as you consume" model, enabling them to set up and remove servers quickly, as and when needed for testing.

Private Hosting

Their production servers, comprising around 95% of their server estate, were moved to a private Claranet hosted platform, and we also moved their connectivity over, setting up a private MPLS network with back-up circuit for added resilience.





Result

By outsourcing this element of their IT, Harding Retail have been able to drive the development of new technology, which they wouldn't have had the time or resource to do if they were still building systems and undertaking proactive maintenance in-house.

A great example of this is the new technology which has been developed for their huge retail operation on the Marella Explorer, Marella Cruises' newest and largest ship. Featuring 12 personalised retail spaces, the operation includes a number of new in-store concepts and cutting-edge features such as a liquor shop with "the world's most advanced digital shelf-edge solution".

With more developments for future ships in the pipeline, Harding Retail's IT team are seeing real benefits from FluidOne support and are investing their new-found time in further innovation and business growth.

"Partnering with FluidOne for server management and break/fix maintenance has ensured that exploits or risk of data loss have been minimised, allowing us to spend more time driving innovation and training through our operational team."

Matthew Batts, Infrastructure Manager, Harding Retail



Get In Touch

We are here to help and with our expertise, we can recommend the right product for your business.