



# Helping an essential business through the pandemic



When we were approached by the UK's largest provider of meals on wheels to help them feed some of the most vulnerable people in the country, we knew it was a challenge we wanted to accept.

Our client, Apetito, is a frozen food company which began life in Germany but now operates across the UK and the US and employs more than 11,000 people.

Here in the UK, their customers range from elderly people living at home to small care homes and NHS hospitals. In recent times, we've all heard the phrase 'essential workers' and there's no question that the Apetito team falls within this category. Because they play such an important role in

our communities, it's absolutely vital that their customers can connect with them easily on a daily basis to place food orders or report issues if there's a problem.

When they came to us in December 2019 to help them with their communications, nobody had any idea of how timely their call was – as COVID-19 was just about to change things for everyone.

## Simplify and standardise

The challenge we were set by Apetito at the end of 2019 was to simplify and standardise the communications for their meals-on-wheels service called Wiltshire Farm Foods, which is made up of 80 franchises.

A change in their business model meant that an increasing number of franchises were being managed in-house allowing the leadership team to re-think the way they communicate with customers.

Historically, each franchise had operated with separate phone systems run by different providers, making them tricky to manage, service and analyse. The problem was that at busy times, calls into the business were getting transferred to a third-party call handler, or left on hold too long, causing customers to hang up. From a logistical point of view, adding lines to offset them temporarily or permanently was tricky and time consuming, and with no access to call data, it was difficult for managers to get an overall picture of their customer service delivery.

Mike Calverley, senior IT and infrastructure manager at Apetito, said: "With our commitment to customer service, we could no longer accept these connectivity issues. The reality is that when people ring us, it's really important because it's most likely about their food for the day or the week. If they can't get through, it can be a real worry to them and this was something we really wanted to address.

"With a change in the business model, we knew we had a window to find something that worked better for not only our customers, but for the business as a whole."



### A swift solution to homeworking

Our solution was to provide Apetito with Cloud Work – an all-in-one product which means that customers can call directly (which is what most of their older clients prefer) or have the choice of using an app, which relatives often find helpful when placing orders for family members.

Internally, Cloud Work offers instant messaging and audio and video conferencing and an online management system so Apetito can view their call data and make business decisions accordingly.

Thankfully, our relationship with Apetito was already underway when the pandemic hit in March 2020. Staff

found the cloud-based system easy to use and just logged on at home and took calls over the internet.

Mike Calverley said: “The fact that we already had a cloud system in place when the pandemic hit was a massive win for us. It was COVID proof and allowed us to communicate as normal despite the chaos around us.

“Before Cloud Work, we had no way of tracking or monitoring phone-calls in or out of the business. We didn’t know how many calls were being answered and how many were being missed. Cloud Work has revolutionised things – and we can monitor and plan so much more effectively now.”

### An appetite for more...

Cloud Work has had a hugely positive effect on Apetito’s business, but they had an appetite for more – and that’s where BTnet came in.

BTnet has been ranked by Netcraft as the UK’s number one dedicated leased line internet service and is our most reliable connection for businesses that need to go beyond broadband. We knew straight away that with its unrivalled reliability and our round the clock support team, it was exactly what Apetito needed in order to have confidence online while feeding the nation in a pandemic.

BTnet has also enabled Apetito to think out of the box to help them navigate the twists and turns of COVID-19.

One of their innovations has been the launch of a fully connected tasting van which tours the country to let

potential customers taste Apetito menus without leaving their place of work. Pre-lockdown, all such tasting sessions took place at the company head office in Trowbridge but restrictions meant that this was no longer viable.

Mike Calverley said: “When our customers could no longer travel to us, we had to be inventive and find ways of getting to them instead. Thanks to BT, the fully connected tasting van means that our tasting menus are now mobile. The vehicle also doubles as an office, which allows staff to process orders for customers there and then. This has been a huge advantage to both them and us.”

### A competitive quote and a supportive relationship

As with any business, the bottom line is vital and Apetito is no exception. They needed a solution that is not just robust and reliable but affordable too – and one which benefits from that all important back-up team.

Mike Calverley added: “BT has made it slick, quick and easy – it’s a brilliant relationship.”

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