MARY KAY®

Objective
Increase sales and improve efficiency by creating a mobile platform to give beauty consultants access to vital business applications wherever they are

Approach
Sought an IT partner that could deliver outstanding technical support, strong and stable product technology and expert team service

IT Matters
- Provide access to vital e-commerce system to increase productivity of salesforce
- Deliver an easy-to-use interface to assist beauty consultants
- Speed up sales process by replacing a manual desktop and fax system with a streamlined mobile platform
- Develop an application that works on thousands of different devices

Business Matters
- IPuts mobile beauty consultants in touch with the latest product and sales information and trends to streamline operations
- Support's Mary Kay's operation in China, which is seen as a key territory

Mary Kay builds a successful mobility platform in China

HPE Technology Services application increases sales of beauty products

The Chinese branch of world-leading cosmetics company Mary Kay wanted to support its beauty consultants by providing anytime, anywhere mobile phone access to its enterprise business systems. The solution was a Mary Kay Mobile Platform proposed by HPE Technology Services.

Challenge

Widespread sales force
In 1963, Mary Kay Ash founded Mary Kay Inc. in Dallas, Texas, USA, with the aim of helping women gain personal and economic success. Today, Mary Kay has become the world's leading direct sales cosmetics brands, with annual sales exceeding US $3 billion. Mary Kay can be found in more than 35 countries and territories worldwide and it employs a sales force of more than 2.5 million.

Mary Kay was launched in China in 1995, and established its Asia-Pacific Production Center in Hangzhou, Zhejiang in 2006. This was Mary Kay's only production center outside the US and following more than a decade of development, China has become Mary Kay's largest foreign market.

"In this project Hewlett Packard Enterprise demonstrated the strength and vision of its Technology Services team, who not only accomplished the objective of developing a full-featured easy to operate mobile application system for Mary Kay China's beauty consultants, but also implemented a big data plan with the future in mind, carrying out detailed research and development as well as deployment."

— Du Siyuan, vice president of Information Technology, Mary Kay China

The company has set up branches in 35 major cities across China and mirroring the gradual pace of development of the business, it has increasingly employed a large number of beauty consultants throughout China. These beauty consultants are considered to be one of Mary Kay's most important business assets to spur the business, but they are scattered across the country and are often required to be out of their offices visiting customers. They were not able to access the company's vital e-commerce systems which severely impacted their sales productivity.

Furthermore, the various locations that the consultants operated have huge differences in lifestyles and internet access environments. There was a need to access the business systems anytime, anywhere. In addition, Mary Kay's beauty consultants do not have professional IT skills, so it was vital that the solution would be easy to use and operate.

Mary Kay enlisted the help of Hewlett Packard Enterprise to conduct research and development aimed at finding a solution that would enable its beauty consultants to keep in touch wherever they were. HPE China's Technology Services Division was chosen because of its implementation capability for the best in class technologies, in addition to providing one of the most comprehensive technical supports in the industry.

By engaging HPE, the customer could also tap the innovative research of HPE Labs in China, which further provided expertise for the mobility platform. The mobile device management platform which was deployed significantly helped to ease the management of devices, standardized the look and feel across multiple operating systems, and provided users updates of the latest information through links to the back-end systems and data stores. The result was an integrated system that can be operated anytime, anywhere.

The old system they were replacing was desktop and fax-based. In particular, Mary Kay wanted to provide its sales force with a mobile app featuring up-to-date product information and pricing, educational material, and improve ordering, mentoring, and new consultant sign-up functions. But as a direct seller, the company doesn't issue devices to its sales network. Instead, each beauty consultant uses his or her own smart device, which meant the company needed its application to operate on thousands of different devices in use around the world. The result of HPE's project was the Mary Kay Mobile Platform.

Solution

Mobility platform

A leading global IT company, HPE has a long standing reputation within the technology services field. It has an experienced team of consultants, well tested methodology, and a wealth of practical experience, as well as successful know how in providing services to customers in different industries. Specific to this project, the team of technical experts developed multiple codes based on HPE EOS (Electronic Ordering System) enterprise mobile application platform. This provided applications for hundreds of smart phones with different systems and configurations. This not only resulted in reduced costs and risks for the project, but also provided a powerful solution to address the group's fragmentation problem.

For research and development of the Mary Kay Mobile Platform, HPE Technology Services consultants factored in the future of mobility and internet trends, including inputs on how Mary Kay China drive their business, including feedback from the beauty consultants.

To ensure congenial user experience, quick and simple, yet comprehensive app functions were built into the front-end interface. This allowed beauty consultants who were not technologically savvy to use the application straight away and with minimal training. It is modeled after a social networking application over a web browser. Consultants can access the latest information through their cell phone and complete orders immediately after the customer confirms their purchase, streamlining the whole business process.

In addition, to cater to remote areas or third-tier cities where the 3G or even 2G networks are underdeveloped, HPE has specially implemented offline features to ensure that the application can provide sales support in any part of China.

Benefit

Keeping in touch

The new mobility platform has enabled orders to take place quickly without the situation where beauty consultants needed to return to their computers to carry out their transactions. This has led to generate productivity and efficiency as the transaction can now be completed when the user confirms purchases quickly, leading to increase in business volume, sales success, and conversion rates.

Customer at a glance

HPE services
- HPE Technology Services research and development of Mary Kay Mobile Platform

"The long term objective of Mary Kay's mobile platform is to enhance the productivity of mobile users, and to build an enterprise application platform to support the company's long term business development strategy, improving the enterprise information utilization rate and the quality of service for the mid-range user."

— Ling Bing, general manager, IT Infrastructure Consulting Services, Technology Services Division, HPE China

It also enables consultants to access sales metrics, immediately accessing and sharing the latest sales and market information with beauty consultants as part of daily operations.

The successful implementation of the project has addressed challenges faced by Mary Kay's beauty consultants across the country, while enabling the company to meet the needs of a new era.

Commenting on the partnership with HPE, Mary Kay China's vice president of Information Technology, Du Siyuan, expressed his satisfaction with the overall quality of service provided by HPE Technology Services team: "In this project HPE demonstrated the great strength and vision of its Technology Services expert team, who not only completed the objective of developing a full-featured and easy to operate mobile application system for Mary Kay China's beauty consultants, but also implemented a big data plan with the future in mind, carrying out detailed research and development as well as deployment."

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