

# AMT Coffee

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*Chief Operating Officer at  
AMT Coffee, Jon Hassal*

**You cannot walk down a high street without seeing people drinking a latte Americano, or a cappuccino. The UK has experienced a 'gourmet' coffee revolution and AMT Coffee has been at the forefront, since opening its first coffee bar in Oxford City Centre in 1993. Today, the company has 66 retail bars throughout the UK including rail stations, airports and city centres, as well as locations in Ireland, Belgium and Germany and the company has plans to continue growing.**

AMT Coffee has built its business and reputation around speed and quality with its award-winning baristas making more than 35,000 cups of fairtrade, organic coffee each day, as well as a wide variety of other hot and cold beverages and snacks. To ensure that the whole organisation runs smoothly the company relies heavily on its IT infrastructure, which connects its new head-office, distribution centre and engineering warehouse in Greenford, with each of its retail bars.

The outsourced IT consultancy, ramzac, was introduced in October 2009 to the business by AMT Coffee's Chief Financial Officer, Fred Edwards, who is on the Board

of another ramzac customer. It was during a period when there lot of changes happening within the organisation all at the same time. "We were expanding the business into new countries, whilst moving our head-office to integrate with the distribution centre," explains Chief Operating Officer at AMT Coffee, Jon Hassall. "The speed of our growth was placing additional pressure on our IT infrastructure, particularly our servers, and we were experiencing problems with our EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) provider. We also felt that our already established IT team would benefit greatly from some second line support, strategic guidance and education."

"From our very first meeting it was clear that ramsac ticked all of the boxes, demonstrating all of the expertise we needed to supplement the skills of our existing team, and bringing new insights from their day-to-day experience of working with other organisations with challenges similar to ours," comments Hassall.

ramzac's first step was to conduct an extensive IT health-check of the entire technology infrastructure, providing a clear benchmark upon which to plan and prioritise immediate actions and budget for future projects. Technical Director at ramsac, Paul Mew, explains the rationale: "Our approach was to help AMT Coffee make the best use of their existing IT investments and only specify new or replacement technologies, timescales for their implementation and approaches to managing them, when required by the business."

The health-check confirmed that an urgent server upgrade was required to cope with the increasing demands that the company were placing upon the IT network. In addition to the hardware and software located at the head-office and distribution centre (including the Blackberry's

and laptops used by the operations team), each of the 66 retail bars are equipped with between one and three EPOS enabled tills, which connect to the distribution centre to manage stock ordering, replenishment and logistics. In addition, each bar can have up to 12 CCTV surveillance cameras installed and this high volume of traffic also runs over the IT network. The company also took the innovative step in early 2010, introducing a contactless payment system that runs over a separate 3G network.

Another aspect in which ramsac was able to help was to act as an independent intermediary between the company and its technology suppliers. This was particularly useful in dealing with problems with the existing EPOS system. Mew explains: "The EPOS system is mission critical for AMT Coffee's day-to-day business, if it does not run smoothly it can impact the whole operation from the speed at which customers are served, through to ensuring the retail bars are stocked appropriately. We were able to act as a liaison between the two organisations, to find out where the issue was and how to resolve it quickly."

AMT Coffee is very happy with the ongoing working

relationship that they have with ramsac. The internal IT personnel at AMT Coffee work shoulder-to-shoulder with a dedicated team from ramsac and meet once a month at the Greenford head-office to work on specific projects or agree future developments. ramsac also provides AMT with a dedicated second and third line technical support resource, to back up the in house team and to provide contingency should the in house resource ever be unavailable. Hassall adds: "Our team benefits from the additional support and expertise ramsac brings and enjoy working with other like-minded experts, who can talk the same language and share the same goals for the company."

"I know I can be confident that the IT is working well because no one ever complains about it, our staff are busy getting on with their daily tasks. So the less I hear about IT the better," concludes Hassall. With the right foundations in place for today and tomorrow, complimented by a strong team to manage it, AMT Coffee is able to focus all of its efforts on further expansion across Europe, with the expectation of opening more than 100 bars before Christmas 2011.