

Charity Retail Association®

The voice of charity retail



Case study: Kudos Software and St Oswald's Hospice



Implementation of a new EPOS system

Founded over 30 years ago, St Oswald's Hospice is a charity in the North East providing specialist and palliative care for babies, children, young people and adults with life-limiting conditions. St Oswald's continually strives to grow its services so that everyone in the region can have expert, dignified and compassionate care when they need it most. The charity's network of retail stores contribute around a third of the income St Oswald's needs in order to provide their services annually.

The challenge

On their old system, St Oswald's 25 charity shops were running on antiquated tills with handwritten stickers for Gift Aid and standalone card machines, which volunteers were nervous to use. The charity was looking to simplify the payment process for its team of 500 shop volunteers, and make the experience more streamlined for customers. "We had a very archaic and basic till system which was hard to use. It put many volunteers off from being till trained," says Charlotte Charlton, Retail Operations Manager for St Oswald's.

The standalone card machine meant volunteers had to manually key in the amount, which leaves room for human error. Charlton cites an example of a volunteer accidentally keying in 90p instead of £90, and the customer leaving with the goods at that price. "Volunteers are heartbroken if they think they've made a mistake that causes the hospice to lose out on funds," says Charlton.

Wanting a user-friendly, quick and efficient modern payment solution that would bring St Oswald's stores into the 21st century, the hospice went out to tender and selected Opayo and its trusted partner Kudos to deliver the winning formula.

Maximum uptime

Opayo's integrated payment solution works steadfastly with Kudos's EPOS software and chosen hardware to deliver a full retail solution to the customer with guaranteed uptime.

"We specify Opayo for all our customers. It has 99.9% uptime which is particularly crucial for charities like St Oswald's as you don't want your shop volunteers worrying whether the payment has gone through or not," says Sarah Dodd, Managing Director at Kudos Software. Charlton concurs: "With Opayo there are no connection issues, just fantastic uptime."

Integrated card reader "a doddle"

Charlton reports that the volunteers can't believe how easy the new tills are to use, with many actually requesting to be till trained for the very first time. "In one of our own volunteer's words, 'taking card payments has gone from frightening to being a doddle'," says Charlton.

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Using the Verifone Engage P400 Plus terminals, and with the software already built in, the till populates the value of the transaction onto the card reader and customers simply follow the onscreen instructions.

“Anything that makes life easier for our volunteers is worth its weight in gold. We value their time so much and couldn’t operate without them, so the fact that all they have to do is press ‘card’ and the rest is taken care of has removed a real barrier to operating the tills.”

Half the time to cash up

A big win for the store managers is a reduction in the time it takes to cash up at the end of each day. “It’s halved the cashing up time for managers. Previously they would have to write everything down and then enter it on an Excel spreadsheet every night. This took at least 30 minutes; now it’s around 10-15 minutes,” says Charlton.

Thanks to both Opayo and Kudos integrating Retail Gift Aid into their solutions, the shop managers also no longer have to input manually the Retail Gift Aid. “Everything has been automated thanks to the barcode scanning system. It’s a little bit more work initially to set up, but the managers and volunteers are loving that the Retail Gift Aid is automatically handled.”

Data flow

The biggest win says Charlton is the vast amount of sales data now at their fingertips. “I can tell you what my shops took yesterday, I can tell you what they took this morning; the level of detail is amazing. We’ve never had the ability to capture this kind of data and analyse it. It’s making shop visits and one-to-ones so much more productive because we’ve got actual sales data to discuss and review.”

This influx of data is helping support a culture of autonomy as St Oswald’s can now easily identify if a shop is underperforming and drill down into how many items have sold, what types of items have sold and at what price. “It’s been revolutionary; our shops managers can’t wait to receive the sales reports each week and are empowered to make informed decisions from the data.”

Charlton says she can’t imagine going back to their old payment system. “It’s been a huge success; we picked the right solution and the right providers. “For volunteers, it’s intuitive, user friendly and removed the barrier for till training; for managers it’s saved time and enabled them to learn from each other’s data; and for customers it’s opened up more methods of payment and removed the £3 minimum spend on cards.”