Process automation software drives significant improvements in key back office processes

Delivering the **world's most successful digital workforce.**

Shop Direct is a dedicated home shopping organisation that puts customers at the heart of its business, marketing itself to consumers through a range of brands including Very, isme and Littlewoods.

Today it has over 10.5 million registered customers and in 2011 its turnover topped £1.7 billion. Shop Direct is not only in the fashion business but is also one of the largest home furnishing and electrical retailers in the UK. Its contact centres handle some 25 million calls and emails each year, with their warehouses sending out a similar number of parcels.

Its mission is to be the UK's best on-line shopping retailer.

What did the business operation want to do?

Shop Direct have an ongoing goal to make its back office and customer facing functions more efficient and effective. This means seeking to automate back office processes, where feasible, to reduce cost, increase timeliness and enhance the simplicity of its operations, whilst also ensuring that customer service is at the forefront of all that they do.

Shop Direct wanted to create an in-house centre of excellence supported by appropriate technologies and methodologies to empower business operations to perform the vast majority of the tasks associated with automating back office processes. As with many organisations, their IT department's resources are finite and focused on major transformation programs. Operations wanted a "self-service" capability to extend the reach of automation and to dramatically increase the speed and reduce the cost with which automations could be implemented, without increasing operational risks. Having deployed Blue Prism Operational Agility software, they now have an in-house ability to create a "virtual workforce" that can quickly be configured and deployed to automate manual and repetitive back office processes.

Examples of processes that have been automated by Shop Direct's in-house Agility team include:

- managing the administration of payment terms with customers following purchase including 'buy now pay later' terms
- managing the administration of the sale of insurance products
- supporting marketing campaigns at point of sale in a fast and responsive manner
- the administration behind ensuring that the organisation is fulfilling its obligations to the FSA

> **"To maintain our competitive advantage we need to be able to respond rapidly to changes in the market, support our marketing efforts and minimise operational cost, whilst ensuring that we maximise customer satisfaction. We have an ongoing objective of automating processes wherever we can," observed Marie Marsden, Head of Credit and Insurance**

The Challenge

The key challenges for the Shop Direct team responsible for managing the administrative processes supporting the business include:

- improving the overall agility of the business to respond to business changes
- managing the impact of seasonal peaks and troughs
- increasing the simplicity of administrative processes
- identifying a fast and cost effective way to automate processes

The Solution

Blue Prism was first introduced into Shop Direct Group Financial Services where they have been automating a wide range of processes in support of the business. Blue Prism has established itself as proven technology provider of a fast and efficient method of automating processes at Shop Direct.

"As a fast moving retailer offering a wide range of products and services, in order to perform successfully we need to ensure we operate at maximum efficiency hence the need to identify appropriate opportunities for automation. We have been able to successfully target Blue Prism at a wide range of complex but critical processes which have previously been manual in nature," commented Lindsay Harrison, Process Improvement Manager, Shop Direct Group Financial Services

Processes that Blue Prism has successfully automated include many that are customer facing including the management of customer payment terms and Insurance sales administration. These are critical processes for any retailer and can have a direct impact on customer satisfaction.

"Maximising customer satisfaction is one of our primary business goals. Through deploying Blue Prism's solution we have been able to automate customer facing processes fast, improving levels of customer satisfaction. I have been very impressed with the value we have derived from Blue Prism, both in terms of its software and supporting professional services," said Carol Brown, Head of Insurance Customer Services, Shop Direct Group Financial Services.

For Shop Direct Group, Blue Prism has provided a "business self-service" capability which Shop Direct has and continues to use to develop and automate a range of processes. Trained Shop Direct staff can use the technology themselves and hence have been able to implement their own automation work rapidly so helping to create an organisation that is agile whilst ensuring compliance with IT governance and operational support models

"Blue Prism has provided the technology and we have built our own in house delivery capability to identify candidate processes and automate them, sometimes in a matter of days. Blue Prism have also helped to train our in-house staff to be self-sufficient but they are always on hand should we need their support and guidance," said Carol Brown.

Blue Prism have provided Shop Direct Group with a scalable and auditable enterprise wide automation solution backed by a range of services which has delivered a quick and adaptive way to integrate and automate processes in a cost-effective manner. Supported by a full suite of management reporting capabilities, it complements Shop Direct Group's technology whilst empowering the teams working on the processes themselves.

The Results

Summary of business benefits delivered by Blue Prism

- Helped to create an agile operating environment
- Significant reduction in FTE requirement to administer manual processes, allowing front line staff to be better utilised on value-add activity
- Dramatic improvement in accuracy and 'right first time' processing
- Enabled Shop Direct Group to economically tackle new automation initiatives
- Rapid response to delivery against tight deadlines
- Ability to access core applications that were either technically or commercially too difficult to reach
- No changes or operational impact on existing systems
- Reduced pressure on stretched IT resources
- Project delivered on time and to budget

> **"By deploying Blue Prism, Shop Direct have reduced the number of FTE's and enhanced customer satisfaction. We can see many more opportunities to utilise Blue Prism functionality across our organisation. We are delighted with the capabilities Blue Prism has been able to deliver us which are directly impacting both our ability to compete in the market place whilst contributing improvements to our bottom line." -Marie Marsden**

About Blue Prism

As the pioneer, innovator, and market leader in RPA, Blue Prism delivers the world's most successful digital workforce. The company's software robots automate repetitive administrative tasks while meeting the requirements of the most demanding IT environments, where security, compliance, and scalability are paramount.

Blue Prism provides a scalable and robust execution platform for best-of-breed AI and cognitive technologies, and has emerged as the trusted and secure RPA platform of choice for the Fortune 500.

To learn more, visit **www.blueprism.com** and contact +44 (0) 870 879 3000 | +1 888 757 7476.