



# Carphone Warehouse calls for cashless

The communications giant is one of the biggest names in the highly competitive telecoms industry and plans to double in size over the next few years. Group Chief Executive Charles Dunstone wants the company to be one of the top 100 listed on the London Stock Exchange.



As well as high levels of customer service, product innovation and a philosophy to outperform the competition, employee welfare is high on the agenda. Charles lists a 'great place to work' as one of the key ingredients for success.

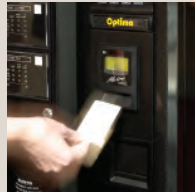
Certainly any visitor to the company's North Acton support centre on the outskirts of the capital cannot fail to be impressed by the modern and efficient office complex, which is home to 1,500 employees.



Each person has their own individual security access and cashless technology card, which plays an integral role in their working day. Restaurant queuing times have been cut by up to 50 per cent and a significant increase in income has been generated following the introduction of the cashless card facilities from leading manufacturer and support specialist VMC.

Everyone builds up an electronic purse to make purchases at the employee shop, restaurant or various vending machines. Money is loaded onto the cards from wall-mounted terminals and there's even a credit card facility. Catering and shop tills operate with cashless card readers and all transactions are monitored by VMC's data management software.

The site's non-stock purchasing manager, Ian Martin-Rodriguez, said combining the cashless functionality with access control has made a tremendous difference in reducing the amount of lost cards.



"This is a high security site and as a way of encouraging people to bring their security cards we integrated the cashless facilities when the catering area was modernised and a new third party caterer took over the catering contract last year. Before then many cards would be left at home.

"We have achieved our objective of getting people to bring in their cards and a lot less get lost now. People are more responsible knowing that they have a cash value stored on their cards. If they lose them, they lose the value built up on them. There used to be people without their cards queuing up to get into the building each morning but that has all stopped now."

According to Ian, VMC's Metro cashless technology system has generated many other benefits, as he explained: "Cashless is more hygienic and efficient than cash. The restaurant queuing times have been cut by as much as 50 per cent; the tills operate much faster, which is important when you have a lot of people anxious to get their breakfast and particularly their lunch.

"The flow of people is now much better, this has been achieved by a revamped restaurant and the introduction of the cashless cards. Since the on-site caterer can now use VMC's data management system there is a lot more accuracy in terms of turnover and product purchases. Under the old cash and manual system we did not fully know what was being spent and where. The system was just not in place. Now we have seen twice the turnover we were expecting which is due to a number of factors."

The VMC system also scores highly on reliability. Ian reckons that around 99.6 per cent of cards work perfectly, and problems with the remainder mainly occur due to mis-use by individuals.

He concluded: "Cashless works extremely well. We have the flexibility of hospitality cards when visitors are here. Everything is much more efficient and very cost effective. As a forward thinking company it plays an integral part in our overall ethos, even Charles Dunstone and all the top executives use the system and are impressed."

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