

Network solutions, a key component of Smiggle's breakneck expansion despite Brexit

Few retail businesses have matched the global success of Smiggle. Since its first store was opened in 2003, the children's stationery brand has garnered international recognition as one of the industry's leading names.

Smiggle's spread across the retail landscape was almost immediate. Launching in Melbourne, Australia, the brand's potential was realised when it was acquired by the Just Group in 2007—Australasia's largest speciality fashion retailer. The Just Group and Smiggle focused on rapid expansion within Australia (currently trading 129 stores), but also launched the brand in New Zealand in 2008 (23 stores), Singapore in 2011 (20 stores), the United Kingdom in 2014 (95 stores), and Malaysia and Hong Kong in 2016 (8 and 7 stores, respectively).

The UK was chosen as the initial site for expansion due to the shared language and similar retail trends. The Smiggle concept proved successful as expected, with the company reinforcing its plans to grow its stores up to 200 in the UK within the next 2 years. Along with this ambitious UK expansion, Smiggle has also recently announced it will open its first store in the Republic of Ireland this May, with up to 20 stores planned to open across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in the next 2–3 years.

The Brexit effect

These recent announcements come just shortly after the European Union referendum. Despite the, perhaps uncertain plans for the UK to leave the EU, Smiggle's chief executive John Cheston is confident that the shifting political and economic landscape won't hamper the company's success as it spreads across borders, pointing to recent sales figures.

Nationwide, the economic insecurity surrounding Brexit has done little to slow down retail sales. Across the UK, total sales volumes in October jumped 1.9% above September, pushing the annual growth rate to 7.4%, representing the strongest pace of growth since 2002. This success is mirrored by Smiggle's own sales numbers.

Finding the formula for success

Retail technology represents a vital piece of Smiggle's success. Upon launching in the UK, Smiggle enlisted leading network solutions provider Hughes to provide its stores with resilient connectivity. Though Hughes was recommended to Smiggle by another renowned and successful high street retailer that works with Hughes to manage their stores across Europe, the deciding factor in signing the 3-year contract with Hughes was not only its credentials but its presence across Europe, which would make the upcoming expansion to the continent more manageable.

Hughes provided the brand's first store at Westfield Stratford City in east London, for example, with managed DSL business



broadband, routing, switching, and 3G backup, as well as phone connections, meaning Smiggle was not required to work with multiple communications providers.

The HughesON™ managed services solution provided each Smiggle store with private connectivity to a central network data centre located in the UK, then backhauling the traffic back to Australia enabling each individual shop to connect to the brand's stocking and distribution infrastructure.

Hughes also provides a backup link to its Network Operations Centre in Griesheim, Germany for resilient failover and, where required, 3G routing technology is deployed via mobile networks. This ensures a seamless switchover to wireless networks in the event of a temporary service interruption at any of the stores.

Moving across the channel

Smiggle is continuing its fruitful relationship with Hughes as it expands its locations across the UK and continental Europe. The company is looking to bring Hughes' latest set of Wi-Fi products into all of their new and current stores in the near future.

The HughesON managed Wi-Fi package includes data collection and data analysis functionalities and Hughes will be on hand to advise on best practise methods of collecting and utilising this data if Smiggle decides to make public Wi-Fi available within its stores. This functionality enables retailers to target customers with personalised offers and special promotions based on their shopping activity.



HughesON is a suite of innovative, Cloud-ready network and digital media solutions designed for the unique needs of distributed enterprises in industries such as retail, hospitality, and retail petroleum.

HughesON is both PCI-compliant and extremely secure—two issues that are currently on the minds of all consumer-facing businesses across Europe as well as many consumers themselves. The new system takes advantage of Wireless Intrusion Protection Service (WIPS), which allows the open airwaves to be constantly monitored for any rogue devices or attacks taking place on the premises. Should this be detected, Hughes is automatically alerted and able to react immediately.

Despite public concern over the effects of Brexit, Smiggle's strong retail offerings, combined with Hughes' international expertise and network solutions, is allowing the company to continue its momentum to new markets.

About Hughes

Hughes Network Systems, LLC (Hughes) is the global leader in broadband satellite technology and services for home and office, including HughesNet®, the world's largest satellite network with over 1 million residential and business customers across North America and Brazil. Hughes also provides HughesON™ managed network solutions to enterprise and government through innovative wireline and wireless network technologies. To date, Hughes has shipped more than 5 million systems to customers in over 100 countries, representing approximately 50% market share. Headquartered outside Washington, D.C., in Germantown, Maryland, USA, Hughes operates sales and support offices worldwide, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of EchoStar Corporation (NASDAQ: SATS), a premier global provider of satellite communication solutions. For additional information about Hughes, please visit www.hughes.com.

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