

St Mel's Brewing Company

Traditional craft masterfully blended with modern communications

“ Brewing is very traditional but our marketing is very modern ”

CHALLENGE

St Mel's Brewing Company is a Longford-based craft brewery that started production in 2014. With a range of Pale and Dark Ales and Lager beers made from the highest quality ingredients, and seasonal specials that continually whet the appetite of a growing band of customers, the firm saw double-digit growth in the first six months of 2015.

A two-man company, the main business challenges are logistical. When Operations Director Liam Hanlon and Managing Director Eoin Tynan are not in the brewery making beer or sorting out sales and distribution from the adjacent office, they are on the road, either delivering or marketing their products. Communications becomes crucial for such a tight ship, and they were suffering badly with poor services from their original provider.

Poor signal strength was one problem. The quality of broadband and mobile had been unreliable, and there was an issue with WiFi – it worked in the office but struggled to cover the production area.

Another problem was unpredictable bills. Cash flow is always an issue for a start-up, compounded in brewing where substantial upfront investment is required, in equipment and then beer production, before it can be shipped and sold. A heavy month of sales calls would result in “bill shock” and unplanned expenditure.

When it came to switching providers, Eoin Tynan decided to move everything to Three. “I'd had such a good experience with them as a consumer that it made sense to move the business over,” he said. “We knew it would be more efficient to move everything to one provider and save us some money.”

SOLUTION

Three now provides the business with all its communications needs: fixed-line, mobile and broadband. The mobile service enables remote working with email-anywhere and diverted calls. They use a top-end Android smartphone – provided by Three as part of the contract – to log into their server from anywhere, enabling the two men to take the business with them when they are traveling.

Broadband and internet access are a prerequisite for any modern business, especially a small start-up like St Mel's. It doesn't have a large marketing budget so looks to get closer to its customers through digital marketing and social media, facilitated by Three's connectivity. “Brewing is very traditional but our marketing is very modern,” explains Liam Hanlon. “Our industry is based on word of mouth so we use social media – Facebook and Twitter, in particular – as well as our website to let people know if we have a new account that brings our beers to restaurants or bars in a customer's area.”



Three.ie

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BENEFITS

Aside from saving money by making Three the single provider, the biggest benefit for St Mel's has been predictability of costs across all communication services. There are no nasty surprises when the bill comes in. "What Three has given us with its bundled pricing is always knowing what we are going to be charged. It's one less thing to worry about at the end of the month," says Hanlon.

Better performance has been another benefit, particularly around broadband. "The service fluctuated with our previous provider and occasionally went down," he said. "It's much more reliable with Three." The two-man team also reports a stronger mobile signal when they are out and about. "We spend a lot of time on the road and were dropping calls in rural areas with our previous provider – that problem has gone away."

The issue with WiFi has also been resolved. Possibly because of the stainless steel tanks, coverage in the brewing area had been very poor. A Three technician came out and fixed the problem with a new modem, giving the business seamless WiFi throughout the 2,800 sq. ft. facility.

Finally, Three's proactive approach to customer service has left the business in no doubt that it has found the right provider. Hanlon talks about Three as a "perfect partner" for a start-up, supportive and reliable and a great enabler for a small business with limited resources. "Three is very good if we want support or need to change anything. There is a text message service, webchat and helpdesk you can use to contact them if there any issues. We've the comfort of knowing we can contact our Three team whenever we need," he says.

To find out more.
Call our Business Team on 1800 200 017

