



Making the virtual vision real

Based in Lahinch, cloud software company HRLocker wanted to establish a stronger presence in major sales markets like the UK. To do this, it turned to smart communications tools that enable virtual communication working while simultaneously staying close to international customers.



Challenge

Human resources software company HRLocker's head office is in Lahinch, and since the company was founded in 2013, its vision has been to encourage remote working as much as possible. Most of its 18 employees work from outside of the office; its head of development lives and works in Galway and one of the team lives as far afield as Brazil.

HRLocker sells its software via the cloud, which has enabled it to build up a customer base in Ireland, and over time, in many other countries worldwide. However it encountered an unexpected challenge when it decided to focus its sales efforts in the UK market, after joining a tech accelerator programme in Manchester in 2017.

People may say they love how the internet lets them buy products from anywhere in the world, but in truth, everyone likes to feel that the seller is closer to home. "Everyone has the idea 'it's the internet, people will deal with you anywhere', but from a sales conversion rate perspective, if they see a number with +353, they know it's not the UK. You need to be able to communicate to the UK with UK numbers, and the customer wants to be able to call you from local numbers. While it is a global marketplace, there's still a local mentality, particularly around HR services," says Adam Coleman, HRLocker CEO and owner.

Solution

As an existing Three mobile customer, HRLocker began using 3Connect, powerful communications software for small and medium businesses. 3Connect works as a 'soft client', so that a person's smartphone or laptop becomes their single point for all communications including voice calls. What's more, 3Connect has a feature that lets companies designate an in-market number that customers can call, and it will ring through to an Irish mobile. Or, when one of the HRLocker team needs to contact a customer, the call appears as though it's coming from the same country. "This is so important for us, as an Irish company selling abroad," says Coleman.

It's also an ideal option for a company that prizes remote working for its team. "Our whole concept is that work is no longer a place. We have people who are fully remote, so this allows people to use telephony and software to have a life outside of their job where they want to." We got into the whole agile way of working and the idea of scrums. Every morning we have a call at 9am and no matter where you are in the world, you dial in to it. Once I have the soft client open I could be absolutely anywhere. We might have only three people in the office and the others are working from home," says Coleman.

HRLocker has since added a Three broadband line to its Lahinch site, so its team can have reliable, high speed connectivity when they are working from HQ. Its mobile plan includes a generous data allowance, so that the remote teams have the option to tether from their mobiles. "It's about having that flexibility to be able to switch on and off technology when you need it," says Coleman.



Benefits

From now on, every member of the HRLocker team will only be assigned a single handset for all calls, as they can load a 'soft client' app on their phones. This has helped HRLocker's recruitment. "It's allowing us to consider talent that is remote which we couldn't have considered before. The infrastructure to enable us to do it is now the norm," says Coleman.

The package is priced competitively, which is an important consideration for a small business that watches its spending carefully. HRLocker can also avail of close support from Three. "Even though we're a small business, we've always had an account manager, there's always been someone we can pick up the phone to. For a small organisation, we're complex and because we're a cloud software provider we'd probably be more technical than most. To be fair to Three, they've given us detailed technical service. Our point of contact has been exceptional," says Coleman.

Using 3Connect has also given HRLocker a valuable 'virtual' presence in its most important markets, and it's made a measurable difference to sales. "It's massive for us. I'd say it's pushed our conversion rate up in the UK by about 10 per cent," says Coleman. For the future, HRLocker is looking at sales opportunities beyond Ireland and the UK. "We're going to be looking at U.S. market entry by the end of 2020 and we will definitely be using Three services in order to make that happen. The relationship is turning into a real partnership," Coleman adds.

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