



## Working in harmony with Symphony

Symphony was founded by its current owner and Chairman, Doug Gregory, back in 1971. Some thirty eight years later, The Symphony Group is now the UK's largest privately owned provider of fitted kitchen, bedroom and bathroom furniture, employing around 850 staff across its Barnsley, Rotherham and field-based operations. Symphony's customer base includes house builders, social housing providers and independent retail outlets in the UK and worldwide.

The success of the company has generated growth that ultimately overwhelmed its former Leeds based manufacturing site, and the opportunity to build for the future was realised with the acquisition of a new area. Its head office and manufacturing facilities are now based at a new, 80 acre purpose-built site just outside Barnsley, South Yorkshire.



With a new site comes the opportunity for a brand new infrastructure and Symphony were swift to consider how they could utilise technology to their competitive advantage. Manufacturing processes at Symphony are fully IT-driven and automated; Just in Time (JiT) production methods are part of the optimal working practices that keep the company lean and efficient.

Charged with the task of selection and implementation of the new IT infrastructure, Symphony's group IT manager, Ruth Rew, recalls, 'We needed to ensure that the IT infrastructure which would be implemented in the new premises would support exactly what the site needed - that was to increase efficiency in the manufacturing process, to support our concept of JiT production and to provide a high level of reliability not only today but also in the many years to come'.

The impressive new, 460,000 square foot facility was built on redeveloped land in easy reach of the A1 and M1. The site includes both the pristine new manufacturing base plus a three storey office for the company headquarters. The specification for the site factored in physical capacity for future growth and the IT infrastructure had to match that future-proof model by supporting the business for years to come.



## The Selection Process

Symphony approached NETcare Europe Limited, part of the LDD Group - the company's long-standing installation and cabling partner. Having evaluated the IT and cabling infrastructure needed to support the business, it soon became clear that a high quality solution would be needed to meet and exceed requirements. To fulfil this standard NETcare recommended a Siemon structured cabling solution.

To cover long distances within the production hall Symphony decided on a 10 Gigabit capable fibre optic cabling solution. 25km of Siemon's OM3 XGLO fibre now runs alongside the building at a height of 20 metres, sitting directly under the roof to avoid interference with the busy production on the shop floor.

In addition to the fibre backbone, a copper cabling network was installed to serve the office environment. 1000 lines of Siemon's Premium 5e support the entire office staff, plus the CCTV cameras and door access systems. This high-performance category 5e connectivity runs over LS0H-treated Siemon UTP cable. Currently the vast majority of the operation requires only a 10/100 connection. As the demands of active equipment evolve, Gigabit Ethernet can be made available through a 1G link that the Siemon category 5e system supports at 160Mhz.

Ten wall-mounted 'factory floor' network cabling cabinets distribute copper and fibre optic services to all sections of the facility, accommodating a total of 1,800 category 5e terminations.

The build includes two data centre rooms; one in the clerical office area and the second located in the main manufacturing hall. Both incorporate Siemon's category 5e HD patch panels, horizontal wire management and MC modular patch cords.

## Wired for Wireless

Wireless technology is also employed at Symphony through a network of wireless access points (WAPs) that provide remote communications throughout the whole facility. Connected to the network through physical cabling connections at each WAP, the wireless capability provides the flexibility for mobile workers such as the product pickers who collate customer orders using handheld barcode scanners and PDA's.

The nerve centre for Symphony is the main IT room, where all network connections culminate. Here a bank of plasma screens display live feeds from all areas of the factory floor, showing real time data to deliver insight and allow tight control of machinery output, stock turn, order processing time, material deliveries and shipment efficiency.

Looking to the future Ruth speculates positively: "We are confident that with the Siemon cabling infrastructure we have a future proof solution in place that will support the business for at least 10 years," she said.

From the outside the physical design and appearance of the Barnsley site is impressive. On the inside, the IT platform is equally worthy of admiration. It is designed to cope with the demands of this growing business and underpin the processes that allow it to compete world-wide.



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