

## Duncan and Todd: remote working

One challenge facing many companies is finding a cost-effective way to run remote operations. Duncan and Todd Corporate Eyecare turned to Compsoft to design and implement a system for its employee eyecare operation - including a national team of mobile opticians - which would reduce administration, cut costs and provide an effective and professional service. More and more organisations in both the private and public sectors are offering eye care as a staff benefit. Duncan and Todd Corporate Eyecare, a division of Aberdeen based Duncan and Todd Opticians, specialises in this growing market, providing occupational eye care on a contract basis.

### **The Business**

While the retail optician arm of Duncan and Todd has been in existence since the early 1970s, it first entered the corporate market in 1991. This coincided with the publication of the Health & Safety Executive's Display Screen Equipment Regulations, which made organisations aware for the first time of the need to take greater care of staff who used computer screens for extended periods. Since then, Duncan and Todd Corporate Eyecare has grown to a network of 10 on-site mobile testing teams, providing services for more than 200 commercial clients across the UK. These clients include Marks & Spencer, Lloyds TSB and Anglian Water.

On-site eye testing at client premises is a convenient and attractive service. In particular, it cuts down the amount of time an employee is away from their workstation, which is the largest single hidden cost for companies when they supply eye care. More and more of Duncan and Todd's clients are opting for this, and by 2004 the administration of this remote system was proving too onerous. In particular, it was hampered by legacy technology.

According to Janice Douglas, Head of Corporate Eyecare, "when the Corporate division started, we happily used an old DOS-based system. But as we grew, it became obvious that we needed something more flexible and streamlined. We were handling huge amounts of data, and also dealing with remote teams working across the country. The previous system was very laborious and involved significant amounts of paper work. We simply could not continue in this way."

Duncan and Todd appreciated that there was nothing on the market that would provide the specialist functionality it needed for this sort of operation: "There are plenty of retail optician systems available, but nothing off-the-shelf for the corporate market with its very different demands. We therefore had to look at developing a bespoke system."

### **The Solution**

Duncan and Todd therefore engaged Compsoft to develop a system which would support their unique and specialist operation. The starting point was to discuss the plans for the business and the limitations of the existing technology, and to identify the best way forward: "Compsoft really listened to what we wanted to achieve and were honest about saying what could and could not be done. With this as the blueprint, the Compsoft team then designed for us a bespoke solution which supports every aspect of our employee eye care operation."

The solution comprises a browser-based system which links to a powerful database holding extensive patient records. This interface enables on-site eye testing teams to log on remotely from client premises or anywhere that has access to the Internet. Compsoft designed intuitive and user-friendly online pages which can be easily used by the opticians as they work. They can access appointments and client records; schedule new appointments; and record eye examinations and prescriptions. The system is also linked into the accounts department at the Aberdeen headquarters, enabling automatic issuing of all invoices as well as payment of sub-contractors. In addition, it feeds into the company's workshops, speeding up the production and delivery of spectacles.

### **The Outcome**

According to Janice Douglas, "while the new system has completely changed the way we work, it has retained all the fundamental parts of our business which made it a success in the first place. Our opticians are able to work remotely and give the very best in eye care without being bogged down by administration or hampered by being on client premises. It was important that all our teams could access the system in real time, to ensure they are working from correct and up-to-date information, which is vital in any healthcare environment. It means our opticians can really keep control of their work and share information with us.

"Our customers get a much better service as all relevant information is available online at the time of eye examinations, and prescriptions are processed far more quickly. But most of all, the system has cut down substantially on administration time and consequently costs as well. It has given us the efficiency and flexibility we need to continue to grow the corporate side of the business nationwide."