Pumped for success, Mr. Gas uses technology to be a market leader

ElastaLink
Business Communications, Uninterrupted

Mr. Gas

For nearly 50 years Mr. Gas Limited has been a leading independent gasoline and diesel retailer based in Ottawa, Ontario. The firm was one of the first true independents in the Ottawa market when it opened its first location in 1972. Now, from 24 locations across Northern and Eastern Ontario as well as West Quebec, Mr. Gas has gross sales in excess of $100 million, more than 100 employees and for the last several years sales have been increasing about five percent per year.



Pumped for success

As a company competing against the multi-billion dollar major oil firms, while at the same time buying fuel supplies from those same big oil firms, Sylvain Lacroix, Manager - Accounting / Information Technology (IT) / Operations for Mr. Gas says, **"We must work very hard on three key factors, number one is to be competitive on price, second to have prime locations and third to deliver the best possible customer experience."**

Lacroix says that the top challenges for Mr. Gas include, staying price competitive and like many other small to medium firms they must deal with rising labour costs as Ontario increases the minimum wage. In addition, the firm monitors the potential impact of trends like electric vehicles. One way to remain competitive is to seize the savvy use of communications technology to gain several benefits including reduced operating costs.

Technology provides the cornerstone for the all-important customer experience. Lacroix says customers have made it very clear that they do notice, appreciate and always demand fast electronic payment transactions.

Being able to accept more than a dozen payment card options is important for many firms in the retail sector. For Mr. Gas additional communications equipment provided by ElastaLink Corporation of Ottawa enabled the firm to meet Payment Canada Industry (PCI) security and technical standards. This in turn means that Mr. Gas saves $2,000 per month that was being paid to a third party firm to process electronic transactions. Lacroix says, **"ElastaLink absolutely helps us to achieve our goal of having the best customer experience possible."**

With every Mr. Gas location linked to the Internet they are all within easy electronic reach of head office. In fact the firm has a daily download of data that is automatically sent to head office from each station. This generates a huge amount of key business data points such as the busiest times of the day, comparative gas prices and what each customer purchased.

"Most of our business decisions are now based on this data flow and we simply could not operate as efficiently and profitably without the data. Given that we have this data and many firms don't, it's a clear competitive edge for us," says Lacroix.



Many small retailers may not think big data can pay big benefits but Lacroix provides just one example. As New Year's Day 2018 approached the management team examined data from previous New Year's Days to determine how much business was coming into each location plus they could calculate hefty overtime labour costs. Being able to analyze this data by hour to hour segments, managers could clearly see the hours of operation needed and whether an outlet should be open at all. Proper decisions were made for each outlet and thousands of dollars were saved.

The business relationship between Mr. Gas and ElastaLink started with the installation at all 24 locations of the Macrotick Router, offered through ElastaLink. The router knits together all the technology that is so crucial to Mr. Gas remaining competitive and profitable.



Courtesy www.macrotick.com

Mr. Gas upgraded the router to include a failover system that switches to cellular-based LTE if the DSL network goes down and also notifies Mr. Gas by email when this occurs. This ensures the full system always works. Lacroix notes that on one weekend early in 2018 they received over 2000 emails in a 24 hour period when the DSL system provided by a major telecom supplier was down across the Mr. Gas chain. But with ElastaLink's failover the reliability that Mr. Gas demands continued **"without missing a beat,"** says Lacroix.

ElastaLink also provides an Internet-based multi-line phone service to all Mr. Gas stores plus three digit extension dialing from headquarters to any location thus eliminating long distance charges. Even with these extra features Mr. Gas reduced its phone costs by 60 percent.

In addition, ElastaLink provides an email system for all employees, hosts the Mr. Gas Web site, and Domain Name Server. The next step will be an ElastaLink offsite backup of all Mr. Gas data. Taken together Mr. Gas has eliminated the aggravation and complexity of dealing with seven different service providers.

According to Lacroix there are three top benefits from using ElastaLink:

1. The ability to provide a customized solution that deals with the unique problems Mr. Gas faces.

2. Since technology plays such a key role in the success of Mr. Gas, ElastaLink is able to provide easy access to the latest technology and provide the secure system so crucial to handling electronic payment transactions and business data.

3. ElastaLink means one phone call access to skilled technical support.

Lacroix says he has no hesitation and in fact has already recommended ElastaLink to other firms, "ElastaLink is easy to work with and always delivers their best efforts to solve your issues in a timely fashion."

MR gas

www.mrgasltd.ca

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