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Look Inside.™

ALSO helping boost margins across the board

Intel® Retail Client Manager helps optimize digital signage revenue for German IT distributor ALSO and its IT resellers

With hardware margins decreasing, IT distributors and their resellers must develop innovative value-add services to defend their position in the marketplace. IT distributor ALSO is harnessing the benefits of Intel® Retail Client Manager (Intel® RCM) to offer its IT resellers and their end customers a range of value-add services to complement their digital signage installations. The result is expected to be higher revenues all round.

Challenge

• **Maintaining revenue.** To defend its market segment share, ALSO needed to complement its digital signage offering with additional services, adding value to its IT resellers and their end customers

• **Vendor lock-in.** Until now, ALSO had only been able to offer customers a limited choice of content management software, primarily from display hardware vendors

Solution

• **Dynamic solution.** Intel RCM is powerful, intuitive and easy-to-use content management software which enables real-time management of marketing content

• **Open system.** When combined with an Intel® NUC, Intel RCM delivers an open system that works across multiple vendor technologies

• **Knowledge is power.** Intel® Audience Impression Metrics Suite (Intel® AIM Suite), which provides real-time insight into customers based on age, gender, and how much time they spend looking at displays, means campaigns can be tweaked to optimize revenues

Impact

• **Great potential.** Since Intel RCM is flexible, open and can be used to manage multiple touch points including point of sale (PoS) kiosks and digital signs, the number of potential customers is huge

• **Profitable future.** The solution gives ALSO and its IT resellers the ability to offer a range of value-add services in addition to hardware, boosting margins across the board

The pool of potential customers for Intel® Retail Client Manager is large

The distributor's challenge

ALSO is a leading European distributor for the information and communication technology (ICT) industry. It offers its customers, IT resellers large and small, everything from high-end servers, storage, and security systems to networking, endpoints and software packages. Besides technology solutions, it also offers supply distribution and a range of standardized and individual value-add services.

Digital signage is a fast-growing segment within ALSO's portfolio. It offers a range of digital displays, from 10-inch up to almost 100-inch, as well as wall and floor stands, accessories and cables and content management software. It works with IT resellers to deliver tailored digital signage solutions that meet the end customer's specific needs, whether that's a single display or a huge, complex installation spanning multiple locations. However, with margins on hardware falling dramatically, ALSO is aware that it needs to offer its IT resellers and their end customers much more than hardware solutions.

Philipp Grüter, product manager for Digital Signage at ALSO Germany, explains: "The IT distributor market segment is extremely competitive and hardware margins are tight. To maintain our leading position, we need to be able to offer additional value-added services to our IT resellers which enable them to serve their end customers. So, beyond selling hardware, which is still a major part of our digital signage business, a major focus moving forward will be on selling solutions. This is where Intel RCM provides a perfect fit into our portfolio."

Intel® Retail Client Manager

Intel® Retail Client Manager (Intel® RCM) is an intelligent software solution that enables retailers to deliver digital content to every screen with greater impact, when and where it matters most. Intel RCM delivers ideal audience segments the right message at the right time. It improves the effectiveness of ad campaigns through audience analytics, gives retailers the ability to remotely manage marketing campaigns in near-real time, and to launch customized content on the fly, to quickly and easily deliver a richer brand experience.

A versatile, open system

"Content management software (CMS) is key to a successful digital signage installation. The more intelligent and centralized the system is and the more granular the level of detail it can offer, then the more successful the campaign is likely to be," explains Grüter.

"Up until now, we've only been able to offer our customers a limited choice of CMS. Essentially, they were tied into using software from their digital display vendor. With very small installations, this didn't present too much of an issue. However, with larger installations, it was often limiting. Also, from our experience, IT resellers want to be able to offer their customers the best available software for their needs. They don't want to be tied into using one vendor."

"Intel® Retail Client Manager provides our IT resellers with a really attractive proposition to sell on to their customers. And, perhaps more importantly, it provides the opportunity for them, and us, to deliver value-add services on top."

Philipp Grüter,
Product Manager Digital Signage,
ALSO Germany

Key features of Intel® RCM:

- Intuitive, easy-to-use platform
- Intelligent tools for controlling the delivery of marketing content in near-real time
- Remotely control retail digital touchpoints from anywhere with enhanced, browser-based manageability capabilities
- Engage optimal audience segments using audience analytics powered by Intel® Audience Impression Metrics Suite (Intel® AIM Suite)
- Capture time-critical sales opportunities
- Customize content on the fly
- Implement globally with a range of languages supported (including English, Spanish, Japanese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, German, and Portuguese)
- Receive real-time error reports
- Control individual consumer digital touchpoints, dedicated channels, or entire media networks with advanced manageability features such as power off, restart, show screen, and direct control
- Take advantage of critical capabilities of wake-up and reset to BIOS for Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT)-enabled platforms[1]
- Create content using any combination of video (from standard definition to ultra-high definition), images, and sound
- Deploy marketing content more cost-effectively, without high distribution and printing costs

When combined with an Intel NUC, Intel RCM delivers an open system that works across multiple vendors' technologies."

Grüter continues: "Intel RCM is more powerful than other products in the marketplace. With most of the vendor-specific content management software, there's no ability to use triggers such as age and gender to tailor the campaign message. Intel AIM Suite gives retailers this sort of customer data in real time, so that they can dynamically adjust their marketing content to suit their audience. Retailers can use this level of customer insight to improve marketing campaigns next time around, thus improving the customer experience and, ultimately, increasing revenue.

"What's really great about Intel RCM is that you can manage any kind of content. It doesn't matter if it's PoS or a kiosk. The pool of potential customers is huge. It's very easy to scale installations. The platform itself is very easy to install and operate. And it saves content managers an awful lot of time. We are already using Intel RCM to great effect on behalf of several customers."

Intel RCM in action

NT Plus, one of ALSO's sister companies in Germany, is using Intel RCM combined with an Intel NUC running on an Intel® Core™ i3 vPro™ processor to offer digital signage solutions to some well-known mobile phone retailers. Stores are able to rent a digital display

from NT Plus. They send all of their relevant marketing content onto the NT Plus team, who then remotely manage in-store marketing campaigns on their behalf. Those working in the mobile phone store are then free to focus on their core job of helping and selling to customers rather than updating campaign collateral. Also, the mobile phone companies can be assured that only the most up-to-date messages are reaching their end customers since, with digital displays, there's no risk of outdated paper signs hanging around once a campaign has ended. NT Plus has launched this service in five mobile phone stores across Germany. Its goal for the next 12 months is to roll out displays to 50 more locations.

Elsewhere, digital signage helps ALSO to support some of its smaller IT resellers to reenter the in-store software business. Grüter explains: "Some of our smaller resellers no longer sold software in their stores, since it was simply not profitable enough. Our teams developed a solution combining electronic software distribution with digital signage. Rather than having the packages in store, the resellers now have digital displays explaining the different software available. If customers want to buy some software, they are given a voucher ID which they can redeem online to download their purchase. It no longer matters if a product is out of stock, customers now always pay upfront for their software and theft of software packages is not an issue any longer."

The digital displays and content are remotely managed by ALSO using Intel RCM and an Intel NUC running on an Intel Core i3 vPro processor. ALSO currently remotely manages 25 of these displays at IT reseller premises and has plans to roll out 45 more over the next 12 months.

Further projects are in the pipeline including ALSO's first pilot of

Intel AIM Suite on behalf of a well-known sports brand, and a further Intel RCM rollout for a home retail group.

Demonstrable benefits

"Besides offering a really powerful software solution, Intel has always been on hand to offer us support when we've needed it," says Grüter. "When Intel RCM was launched, Intel provided our team with excellent training and support. If we need to, we can approach Intel with our customers' specific needs and, if they are slightly unusual — for example, if the customer wants to incorporate near field communications (NFC) — Intel will work with us to brainstorm and develop a really tailored solution that meets their needs. Being able to offer this sort of service really helps us to stand out in the marketplace."

ALSO now has a retail technology showroom in Soest, Germany, where customers can experience Intel RCM first hand. "IT resellers are able to use the showroom to demonstrate the benefits of Intel RCM to their customers," explains Grüter. "This is a huge benefit. In the past, some of our IT resellers, who aren't experts in marketing, have really struggled with confidence in explaining the ins and outs of digital signage solutions to their customers, who often are marketing experts. Now they can experience the demonstrations firsthand. They are no longer worried about not knowing what they are talking about. It gives them, and their customers, the opportunity to try before they buy."

"Intel Retail Client Manager provides our IT resellers with a really attractive proposition to sell to their customers. And, perhaps more importantly, it provides the opportunity for them, and us, to deliver value-add services on top," concludes Grüter.

Lessons Learned

The IT distributor market segment is becoming increasingly competitive. As a result, distributors have to think more creatively about ways to maximize revenue. One way to do this is to offer value-add services to IT resellers and end customers. ALSO found that a flexible and open content management software solution like Intel® RCM offered huge potential in providing additional services to its digital signage customers.

Find the solution that's right for your organization. View success stories from your peers and check out the IT Center, Intel's resource for the IT Industry.

For further information about Intel® Retail Client Manager, visit www.intel.com/rcm