

OVERVIEW

CUSTOMER

- Rent-A-Center

INDUSTRY

- Retail

THE NEED

Rent-A-Center wanted to align with a single channel partner to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and manageability of its company-wide IT operations.

THE MOBIUS ADVANTAGE

As one of HP's top enterprise-class resellers in the U.S., Mobius Partners brought its extensive technical expertise and exceptionally attentive customer service to develop the right strategy, recommend the right solutions, and deliver to Rent-A-Center optimal results.

THE RESULTS

Mobius Partners and HP formed a true collaborative partnership with Rent-A-Center to help the company leverage HP's full breadth of technology solutions—effectively streamlining its IT infrastructure, training, and daily processes.



Rent-A-Center

Since its founding in 1986, Rent-A-Center has provided a flexible, affordable way for consumers to purchase name-brand furniture, appliances, computers, and electronics. Rent-A-Center has taken its rent-to-own concept from the company's 16 original stores and expanded it into more than 3,000 stores serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

Given the large geographic territory Rent-A-Center serves, the company is heavily dependent on information technology (IT) to ensure efficiency across all facets of its operations—from point-of-sale terminals in retail stores through end-to-end supply chain management. The company formed a strategic partnership with Hewlett-Packard (HP) and its top Texas reseller, Mobius Partners, to enhance the effectiveness of Rent-A-Center's IT infrastructure.

Challenge: Optimize Every IT Decision

Previously, Rent-A-Center had relied on a variety of vendor partners to help the company address its IT needs. When Elliot Pierron joined Rent-A-Center as its Data Center Manager in 2007, he immediately began exploring how to better leverage and support the company's HP Data Center assets more effectively. For Pierron, that meant creating better continuity and consistency through a single vendor. Impressed with HP's full breadth of cost-effective solutions, Pierron chose to work with HP partner Mobius Partners because of the company's highly-trained technical resources, exceptional responsiveness and close proximity to Rent-A-Center's Plano, Texas headquarters. Plus, as the top enterprise-class HP reseller in Texas, Mobius Partners brings to the table a deep understanding of HP's solutions and how to best align those with Rent-A-Center's needs to generate results.

"My message to my staff was that we had too many HP vendors and we couldn't be as effective because of it," adds Pierron. "From a manageability perspective, we needed to align ourselves with a single partner so we'd get increased value and service. I believe there is added value in having a consistent team and single point of contact through Mobius Partners. The Mobius Partners team continually adds value and provides an enhanced level of service that brings out the best in HP."

Solution: Establish a Collaborative Relationship and Reap the Rewards of Value

Based on Rent-A-Center's history with resellers, Mobius Partners realized early on that establishing Rent-A-Center's trust was paramount. This was particularly important to help ease the concerns some Rent-A-Center team members had about interjecting a reseller into the Rent-A-Center/HP relationship. Thus, weekly face-to-face meetings were instituted with team members from Rent-A-Center, Mobius Partners and HP. These roundtable interactions provided a forum for sharing ideas, discussing solutions, and ultimately establishing a sense of camaraderie and open communication, according to Mobius Partners' regional sales manager Buck Jones.

"Mobius Partners and Rent-A-Center have built a strong relationship because we've been able to bring all parties together at the same table and use each company's strengths to help Rent-A-Center grow," Jones says. "Rent-A-Center is an ideal model of how to approach every account because they were willing to participate in a true partnership."

For Rent-A-Center, the value of this partnership has translated into more efficient and effective IT solutions across the board—from implementing new HP PolyServe products and HP Blade server and storage technologies to improving day-to-day processes. For example, Pierron's team had roughly a month to implement and launch a new infrastructure for the Centralized Purchasing Retail environment. Thanks to the close working relationship with Mobius Partners and HP, he was able to obtain advanced notices and guarantees on procuring the equipment and actually beat the installation schedule by a week. "Looking back, it would have been very difficult to accomplish this project in that aggressive timeframe without Mobius Partners and HP," says Pierron.

In addition to implementing HP solutions, Mobius Partners also helps direct the Rent-A-Center team to educational opportunities, as well as develop new standards and processes to create greater synergy throughout the ordering and installation process. "Mobius Partners has been able to identify resources, such as seminars and training, and are working with us to ensure we get the best technology and equipment," adds Pierron. "We have business challenges and projects with quick turnaround times. Mobius Partners has taken our environment and playing field and made the best of it. Their

Solutions Architect offers suggestions on configurations and makes sure we don't buy more or less than what we need."

Results: Invest for Long-term Success

Whereas some resellers might partner with a customer for a few projects, Mobius Partners approached the Rent-A-Center engagement as a strategic relationship—one that provides opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed. And while some might view a third-party channel partner, such as Mobius Partners, as a middle-man, Pierron believes having Mobius Partners in the equation has been invaluable. Mobius Partners has been able to work closely with Rent-A-Center to help the company continually monitor its business and operations environments and select the right HP technologies to fit its evolving needs.

"The technical competence and responsiveness of the Mobius Partners team, coupled with the weekly meetings and numerous follow-ups to make sure we were taken care of, has validated for me that we made the right decision," says Pierron. "Mobius Partners knows our environment and infrastructure, and as a result can more effectively reach out to the right HP resources and help us out. Because they have a bigger picture in mind, they can deliver tremendous value to both HP and to us."

And for Mobius Partners, that is exactly the goal of each client engagement—taking a holistic approach to analyze and assess how an organization can best leverage their IT assets, while investing in the future. "As a reseller you have to continually ensure you bring value, and this partnership with Rent-A-Center is a great example of the value Mobius Partners adds for customers every single day," says Jones. "We have the expertise and ability to make diverse technical recommendations and address a wide variety of their needs, so the strategic value we are providing is high."

Even in today's technology driven environment, some organizations still view IT as a liability, rather than opportunity that can be leveraged to gain market share. Over the years, Rent-A-Center has adopted a more proactive view of its IT operations, and with the ongoing Mobius Partners partnership, Pierron believes IT will continue to play a significant role in the company's future growth.

"Rent-A-Center has come to recognize IT as a strategic asset for growth," explains Pierron. "I look forward to our continued partnership with Mobius Partners to help us continue to identify and implement the right technology to meet our tactical and strategic business needs. If I had to sum up the Mobius Partners—Rent-A-Center partnership, it would simply be "outstanding partnership!"

Platinum Business Partner

