



Modern Networks
transition IT services of 12
major shopping centres in
just three months

modern**networks**





Modern Networks is pleased to announce the successful completion of a major project to migrate all core IT services and support of 12 flagship shopping centres to Savills as the new managing agent in just three months. The shopping centres transitioned were Derby, Merry Hill, Milton Keynes, Chantry Place, Watford, Nottingham Victoria Centre, Braehead, the Metrocentre, Gateshead, Uxbridge, Lakeside, the Trafford Centre and Barton Square.

PROJECT BY NUMBERS

9 weeks

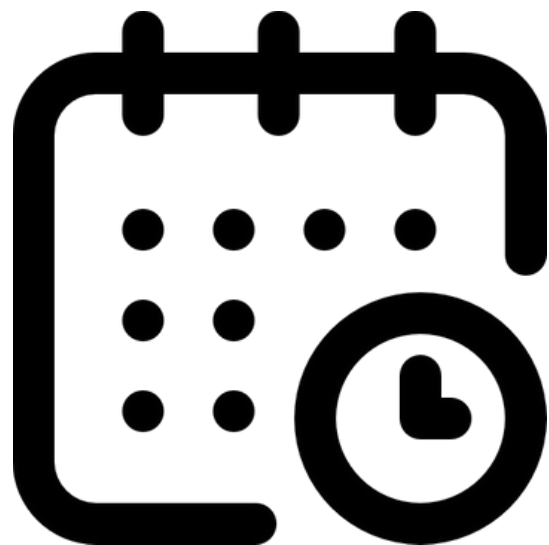
12 large shopping centres

1600 users

2686 miles

1 amazing team

A tight schedule



Modern Networks is a leading provider of IT managed services and support to the UK's retail and commercial property sector. Since early September 2020, the company has met a challenging schedule of migrating one shopping centre every three to five days. Each technical transition included computer hardware and business applications, Internet, telephony, network infrastructure, Wi-Fi and Cloud services.

Additionally, Modern Networks UK-based Service Desk is providing each site with 24/7 technical support, continuous network monitoring and security. Modern Networks have also been able to retain the knowledge and expertise of nine on-site IT staff by transferring them under TUPE regulations. By the end of the project, Modern Networks had transitioned 1600 users to our managed services across all 12 sites.

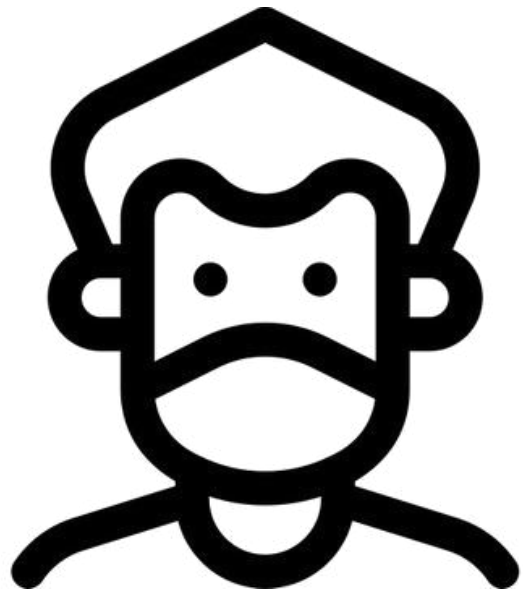
Transition without interruption

Once Britain's largest shopping centre owner Intu went into administration in June 2020. To ensure the on-going viability of each site and secure as many jobs as possible, it was essential the administrators found new owners quickly. According to a report by Sky News Intu employed 3,000 people directly with another 102,000 people working in its shopping centres. The fast, smooth transition of all core IT services and support to Modern Networks has helped ensure that each site can continue operating without interruption.



Overcoming pandemic restrictions

Ordinarily, migrating the IT and telephone services of 12 large shopping centres from Glasgow to Essex in just three months would be an enormous task. However, 2020 has been far from a normal year. The Covid-19 pandemic created a range of new obstacles for Modern Networks project planners and field engineers. As an accredited SafeContractor, Modern Networks already followed strict health and safety guidelines when on site and have since added extra precautions to help minimise the spread of Covid-19.



To ensure the virus did not disrupt the company's tight transition schedule, Modern Networks organised special teams of field engineers. Each site was assigned two parallel teams to complete the transition work. If Team A were unable to attend site due to illness or quarantine then Team B would immediately take their place.

A truly collaborative effort



In-depth assessment of the project by Tony Whitehorn, UK Retail Operations Director, Savills

How did the project achieve Savills core objectives?

From the outset of the project, it was fundamental to have a joined up approach with all parties. It was essential to win the hearts and minds of not only the transitioning site teams but also bring the head office teams on the same journey as well. Modern Networks understood this from day one, and ensured transparency and openness at every stage of the migration.

The time pressures associated with this project were such that the personal touches could have easily been forgotten or glossed over, but the team did a tremendous job in ensuring all questions were answered, all areas of the project explored and communicated with all involved. As a result of the way Modern Networks setup the plans and delivery teams on site meant that the core objectives of “people first” meaning winning those hearts and minds of the site staff and a project delivered on time were met.

"A real sense of one team"

How has the project improved the workplace?

There was a real sense of anxiety for the transitioning teams in the very early stages, not knowing what to expect or how the new managing agent structure will affect the delivery teams. The way in which Modern Networks worked hand and glove with Savills showed the INTU teams how collaboratively we work; there was a real sense of one team. The working environment as a result was a relaxed one, the site teams could have confidence that this transition project was well in hand and Modern Networks could be trusted to deliver exactly what they set out to do.

What were the main challenges and how did Modern Networks overcome them?

There were a great number of challenges, the main three being time pressure, complexity of sites and delivery in lockdown during the pandemic. As the Centres were all in Administration following the collapse of INTU, there was an urgency to deliver these transitions as quickly and smoothly as possible.

"What was delivered here was nothing short of impossible"

Delivering a set of IT transition plans for 12 different sites with back-to-back transition dates outside of the pandemic would have been problematic, what was delivered here was nothing short of impossible. Modern Networks were able to overcome these issues with good planning and sticking to those plans. Modern Networks listened closely to the site teams and really understanding their requirements. They were also sensitive of social distancing whilst having a set COVID policy to ensure a safe transition of every site. The biggest factor was the communication from Modern Networks, this allowed Savills and the INTU teams to fully integrate and work together to deliver the best possible outcome.

"It was almost a symbiotic relationship"

Can you provide examples of successful collaboration?

As the Operational lead, I worked closely with the Modern Networks team on all of the transitions on site. It was almost a symbiotic relationship in terms of both parties knowing each other's plans down to the detail. This was crucial in delivering this project. I knew there were certain items of the project plan that needed to be delivered before I could undertake my transition plans. By the time we had the first Centre over the line we all knew what time of the day these particular aspects were due or should be due to be completed, allowing each other time to undertake the relevant tasks on site. We would have regular catch-up meetings on site to discuss any potential pinch points and work together to overcome these.

"All 12 sites delivered on time and to plan"

What were the measurable results of the project?

The ICT provision was complex, the sites are extremely large with many staff at each. This involved new PC's for sites, all mobile phones and devices requiring wiping and updating with new apps, new email accounts for all 1600+ staff, connectivity to our new systems all whilst delivering the main ICT plan and troubleshooting on-site too. The biggest measure was the successful delivery of all 12 former INTU sites into Savills management on time and to plan.

Modern Networks have done an amazing job. The project has been demanding at times, requiring long hours, but Modern Networks have always delivered with a smile and given first class customer service. They should be very proud.

Avtar Bains, Project, Manager, Business Systems, Savills



We're delighted to have be awarded these prestigious contracts. We've received great feedback from the clients at each centre as we've successfully transitioned them without any downtime whatsoever. We're now looking forward to supporting the centre teams so they can continue to provide great retail experiences to their customers.

James Tizzard, Managing Director, Modern Networks

Unique challenges presented by every shopping centre



Every shopping centres has presented Modern Networks with its own unique set of challenges. However, each site transition has followed a highly successful project plan and process. First, all telephone services except mobiles were migrated while retaining their original numbers. Second, all computer hardware and business applications were transitioned. Once completed, users have new Microsoft 365 logins, mailboxes and file sharing facilities.

Third, Modern Networks wiped and reconfigured all mobile devices. Fourth, new segregated Wi-Fi services were made available to centre management, retail tenants and shoppers. Fifth, remote workers were setup online with VPN access. Finally, Modern Networks provided all documentation and training required. On completion of the transition process, each site is handed over to Modern Networks Service Desk for on-going technical support.

A great outcome

The Covid-19 pandemic has made a tough trading environment even more challenging for retailers. The swift transition of 12 prestige shopping centres to new ownership, managing agent and IT service provider has helped ensure their futures and secure jobs.



About Modern Networks

Modern Networks specialise in IT support and network services for commercial property.

Today, over 1800 landmark office buildings and shopping centres rely on us for everything from email and computers to Internet and broadband. Our clients include CBRE, Savills CEG, Cushman and Wakefield, JLL, Knight Frank, GVA and Colliers. Designed specifically for commercial properties, our IT solutions are built on tried and trusted Microsoft, HP and Cisco technologies. We are Cyber Essentials certified and SafeContractor accredited for the highest standards of health and safety in the workplace. For over 20 years, Modern Networks have been providing commercial landlords and managing agents with complete IT support and network solutions you simply cannot find elsewhere.



To learn more about our range of IT support and managed services for commercial property and retail, contact Modern Networks today.

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