Overview
With an old point of sale (POS) system struggling to cope, Fat Face needed something that would better support the company’s omni-channel and international ambitions. The retailer wanted a system that would provide a stable backbone across its online and in-store activities. But the biggest problem was getting everything in place in time. On paper it looked impossible... but that was the challenge.

Background
Born on the slopes of the Alps, Fat Face is an active lifestyle brand that sells kit for men, women and kids as well as footwear, jewellery, and accessories. But when its POS system started showing signs of age, the retailer had two choices. Patch it up, get through the peak trading period with a shaky system liable to break under the pressure. Between Fat Face and BT the challenge was to:

• deliver a fully functional, scalable omni-channel system, including a PCI DSS compliant payment solution
• roll it out to 420 tills at more than 200 Fat Face stores
• integrate with existing merchandising, logistics, warehouse systems, e-commerce and call centre solutions to support a genuine omni-channel experience
• replace the legacy system before Christmas with no down-time or impact on any trading activity

With such tight timescales there was absolutely no margin for error.

Challenge
Similar bespoke deployments typically take up to 18 months. BT had just nine months to do everything – or risk hitting the retailer’s peak trading period with a shaky system liable to break under the pressure.

Solution
The integrated BT solution includes software and infrastructure across three key elements. The BT Expedite Multichannel Connected Retailer Suite, comprising Store 6 (POS), Audit and Operations Management (AOM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications. This is hosted on the BT Cloud Compute platform which can grow and shrink as needed, with Fat Face only ever paying for the processing power it actually uses. Finally, BT’s managed payment service, specifically designed to meet the new Payment Card Industry Security Standard (PCI DSS).

Leon Shepherd, Business Change Director at Fat Face, says: “With new technology, tight delivery timescales and a whole host of third-party integration challenges, this needed to be a real team effort. Had things gone wrong, the combination of a failing legacy system, peak period demand and growth aspirations could have sunk the whole operation.

“We succeeded because of the level of collaboration. Everyone involved – the internal team, BT Expedite specialists and our other partners – worked tirelessly over nine months to nail the solution.”

Leon Shepherd, Business Change Director, Fat Face

Results
The solution was rolled out across all 206 Fat Face stores in time to support a record Christmas sales peak for the retailer, with double digit sales growth. Leon Shepherd observes: “It was a brave decision to push
“It was a brave decision to push ahead and the results have been fantastic, with the system proving resilient throughout our biggest ever trading period and driving significant multichannel growth.”

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Operations — Real-time sales data is being used to optimise trading, in terms of stock allocation, opening hours and deployment of staff.

Conclusion
Fat Face has no intention of resting on its laurels. There are already plans in the pipeline for an enhanced click & collect initiative, in-store PayPal integration and mobile POS devices. “We’ve established a new benchmark for POS projects,” concludes Leon, “by replacing mission critical legacy systems with an on-demand, scalable cloud-based platform in record time. We now have a platform in place to support genuine omni-channel retailing and future growth.”

Fat Face

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And now the benefits of a new, more stable, integrated system are being felt right across the business. Examples include:

Promotions — Fat Face can now plan and execute a promotion in hours rather than days and then manage it to each and every till.

Training — Reducing till training from one week to just three hours for each sales assistant has created huge savings in annual training costs.

Payments — There’s no credit card data on any Fat Face system, completely reducing the scope of its PCI DSS compliance obligations.

Core services

- BT Expedite® Multichannel Connected Retailer Suite, comprising Store 6, Audit and Operations Management and Customer Relationship Management applications
- BT Cloud Compute
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