



CASE STUDY

How a mobile workforce empowered the McMillan Shakespeare Group

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as the catalyst for significant change across Australia and the world since 2019, including accelerating digital transformation. According to research from McKinsey, the pandemic has accelerated digitisation across the Asia Pacific region by four years.¹ For the McMillan Shakespeare Group (MMSG), the pandemic forced a complete shift in its operations as it transitioned to remote work for the first time with the support of Blue Connections.

¹. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever>

The Challenge

Prior to the pandemic, MMSG operated with a 100 per cent work from office policy, supported by desktop PCs at fixed desks across the company's offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide. However, as case numbers increased across the country in March 2020, government restrictions forced businesses like MMSG to pivot to remote working.

While MMSG initially supported its workers using their own devices at home and connecting via remote desktop protocol (RDP) to desktop PCs in the office, extended lockdowns forced the company to reassess.

Brett Patrikeos, head of IT infrastructure and cloud, MMSG, said, "MMSG wasn't initially set up to support a remote workforce and, while connecting via RDP delivered an interim solution, it was clear that this would not be suitable long-term. It created a number of challenges, especially for MMSG's contact centre agents. The decision was made to move to a more comprehensive mobile solution."

The Solution

After assessing numerous providers, MMSG decided to partner with Blue Connections for the first time based on its comprehensive and flexible service offering. The Lenovo product package and support solution that Blue Connections put forward included Lenovo L13, Lenovo T15, and Lenovo X1 Carbon products and met MMSG's requirements around product availability, device reliability and security, and logistics. Brett Patrikeos said, "MMSG had experienced challenges with its incumbent devices requiring repair. Lenovo prides itself on stringent testing and quality control on its devices; this was a key consideration for MMSG. Blue Connections offered several solution packages, including the Lenovo products, and would honour services associated with the products at the time. This brought Blue Connections ahead of the competition and MMSG was comfortable in partnering with Blue Connections for this project."

Jayk Gunton, account executive, Blue Connections, said, "MMSG needed a quick transition. Knowing this, Blue Connections put forward the most reliable products for the transformation, taking global supply shortages into account. Based on MMSG's requirements, Blue Connections recommended the Lenovo product suite as it was the most suited for MMSG's organisational needs."

Following initial discussions in July 2020, Blue Connections provided 10 devices for the MMSG team to test. After receiving the test devices, MMSG conducted an extensive proof of concept (POC) to ensure the Lenovo product suite would be suited to the company's remote working environment before proceeding with the bulk order for the full fleet of products.



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Jayk Gunton
Account executive,
Blue Connections



“This flexibility was critical to MMSG’s device rollout.”

Brett Patrikeos
Head of IT infrastructure
and cloud, MMSG

Brett Patrikeos said, “MMSG had three user groups that needed to be considered, including standard, power, and executive. MMSG and Blue Connections worked closely to guarantee the Lenovo devices could be suitably configured and dispatched nationally to end users’ addresses. Once this process was complete, MMSG proceeded with the full order which included a fleet of approximately 950 Lenovo devices.”

Due to the lockdowns across New South Wales and Victoria, MMSG and Blue Connections faced challenges distributing each device to users, with some users still working from office locations while other had transitioned to full-time remote work.

It was essential that MMSG could deliver new devices to its users in a timely manner to reduce the potential impact on productivity. With workers spread across four capital cities, including many under strict lockdowns, and further into regional areas, MMSG and Blue Connections faced significant logistical challenges to roll out the device upgrade.

Brett Patrikeos said, “Blue Connections’ flexibility was a key component in its engagement, and this was evidenced in the delivery process. Blue Connections supported MMSG with a hybrid rollout process, with some devices being sent to central locations, such as the Brisbane office, where users could come in to coordinate deployment. However, heavy lockdowns in Melbourne, for example, meant most devices were sent directly to users’ homes along with instructions for support.

“This flexibility was critical to MMSG’s device rollout. Without the support from Blue Connections and its ability to rapidly configure and distribute the full fleet of devices as needed, MMSG was at risk of experiencing lost productivity.”



The Result

Moving to a fully remote workforce supported by managed devices has delivered a more secure and modern workforce for MMSG. Since transitioning to the Lenovo devices with the support of Blue Connections, MMSG has achieved greater uptime for its users and better security from an IT perspective.

Brett Patrikeos said, "The MMSG workforce was happy to move to a work from home environment and there hasn't been any drop in productivity as a result. There's been positive feedback across the board for the machines, and the rollout process with Blue Connections has been simple and effective. Like any organisation with contact centre operations, MMSG has experienced agent churn; however, the Blue Connections process to collect, sanitise, and redistribute devices as needed has been seamless.

"PRIOR TO MOVING TO REMOTE WORK, THE CRUX OF OUR SECURITY WAS BASED ON THE PHYSICAL CONFINES OF THE OFFICE. IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT MMSG MOVED ITS WORKFORCE TO SECURE DEVICES, AND BLUE CONNECTIONS AND LENOVO DELIVERED THIS."

With 250 devices remaining from its prior fleet that are yet to reach their end of life, MMSG is looking to the future with Blue Connections to support its end-to-end lifecycle management. In addition, MMSG has recently entered discussions with Blue Connections to support digital transformations across its recently acquired entities.

Get In Touch:

 1800 659 477

 enquiries@blueconnections.com.au

 www.blueconnections.com.au

