

Jersey Boys

LCT reports on an outstanding success starring Angora Besco and DryStream

Nestled close to the Cherbourg peninsula near the north French coast, the islands of Alderney, Guernsey, Herm, Sark and Jersey lie as five tiny jewels in the wild English Channel. These are the Channel Islands, a group of communities that pledged allegiance to the English Crown in the days of William the Conqueror in 1066.

Although geographically much closer to France than to the United Kingdom, the Islands remain intrinsically British. The principal language is English and their sovereign is Queen Elizabeth II but the Islands are constitutionally independent with their own laws including, quite importantly, those concerning tax.

VAT, or Goods and Services Tax (GST as it is known locally), is just three per cent in Jersey while residents there pay a flat rate of income tax of just 20 per cent. So the Islands have attracted high net worth individuals since Napoleonic times and have become an important corporate financial centre which contributes towards half of the State's gross domestic product.

Tourism plays a huge part in the economy. There are 200,000 residents and over 729,000 visitors each year, mainly from the UK, and with all this traffic there's a consistent demand for associated services including laundry and drycleaning.

Angora Besco has operated the largest chain of drycleaning shops on the Islands for more than 21 years and presently runs a mix of several processing units and receiving shops throughout the five islands. The company offers a full range of drycleaning and laundry services for residents, visitors and the restaurant and hotel trade on the islands.

Operations of this nature require careful planning and the company recently decided upon DryStream to help them sort it all out. DryStream supplied a number of electronic point of sale (EPOS) systems to help with sales, customer service, production and stock control.

"Manual systems just couldn't work any more and we needed to computerise fully," says Hugh Roe, group director at Angora Besco.

"We tried other systems in a few of our branches and we investigated the market thoroughly, but DryStream fitted our needs better than the rest and our staff have taken to it a lot quicker than any other system."

After an initial trial phase, Angora Besco purchased DryStream EPOS systems for all its key branches, which will help contribute to the overall plans that management has for success in the coming years.

DryStream delivered and installed all the equipment in each shop and provided training to all the staff involved. Telephone support is provided

free of charge for as long as Angora Besco keep the systems.

The logistics of operating between five different islands could be a nightmare. How do they manage that?

"We don't have processing equipment on the smaller islands of Alderney, Herm or Sark," explains Cathie Brady, director of drycleaning, "So we receive work there and send it to Guernsey by boat for processing. The finished goods are returned back by boat on a daily or weekly service depending upon the ferry schedules and time of year."

She adds, "And DryStream will help them track and monitor work when it comes to production to help them meet or exceed customer expectations."

"It's a problem to miss a customer's item when you're processing locally but a catastrophe if you find the item is on another island," says DryStream's Bernie Jay.

"DryStream will help the production teams keep track of their commitments and so avoid customer disappointments."

"Although we are the largest cleaning group on the islands we do not have a monopoly," says Hugh Roe.

"Quality of service is paramount and we achieve this with good service and a spread of outlets in the best locations throughout the islands," he continues.

"DryStream will help us know our customers better and will help our staff to interact with them more. At the same time our ability to dial in to each store will be a real benefit."

With such a closed market the company relies more on word of mouth and customer referral than advertising to bring in new business. No doubt that's why, particularly in today's financial climate, management is focusing heavily on tools that will improve customer satisfaction, and in the current market that's essential in every business.

"Every trip to Angora Besco is a great experience," says Bernie Jay.

"The Channel Islands are a world of their own and we're delighted to be the supplier of choice to Hugh, Cathie and the rest of the Angora Besco management team. At DryStream we wish them every success for 2009 and look forward to being of service to the company long into the future."

FAR RIGHT: DryStream's Bernie Jay, Hugh Roe and Cathie Brady

RIGHT: DryStream TOUCH EPOS systems



ABOVE: DryStream system & DST monitor



ABOVE: Leocadia Ferreira and Beta Velosa at Burtol Cleaners branch in Jersey



RIGHT: Burtol Cleaners, part of the Angora Besco group



ABOVE: Sonia and Alexis at Burtol Cleaners' branch in Jersey



Cory's Cleaners, part of the Angora Besco group



ABOVE: Fatima Alves at Angora Dry Cleaners' branch in Jersey



ABOVE: Fatima Alves and Lucia at Angora Dry Cleaners' branch in Jersey

