



in a nutshell  
**Dip**

**Customer:**

FirstPort

**Industry:**

Private residential and retirement property services

**Solution:**

FirstPort is the largest residential property manager and the leading retirement property management company in the UK. Most of the communication with the 1400 staff who work on site at the retirement developments that the company manages was by post, generating mountains of paper and hours of laborious processing.

O<sub>2</sub> equipped the FirstPort team with 1400 tablets, running Office 365, and transformed the way they worked to allow voice, video and data communications over an end-to-end integrated network.

As well as lower costs and improved efficiency, the people at FirstPort are already working closer together, with a growing sense of community across a highly distributed business.



# FirstPort:

Transforming service with  
tablets and digital services

O<sub>2</sub>  
business

## About FirstPort:

FirstPort is a property services business. It provides property services solutions across the UK, backed by local, personal service.

**FirstPort employs more than 3500 people, of which 1400 work on site at one of the 1500 retirement developments managed by the company. It's a national company, but it has a strong local focus, with resident managers at the majority of retirement developments.**



in depth  
**Dive**

## The Challenge:

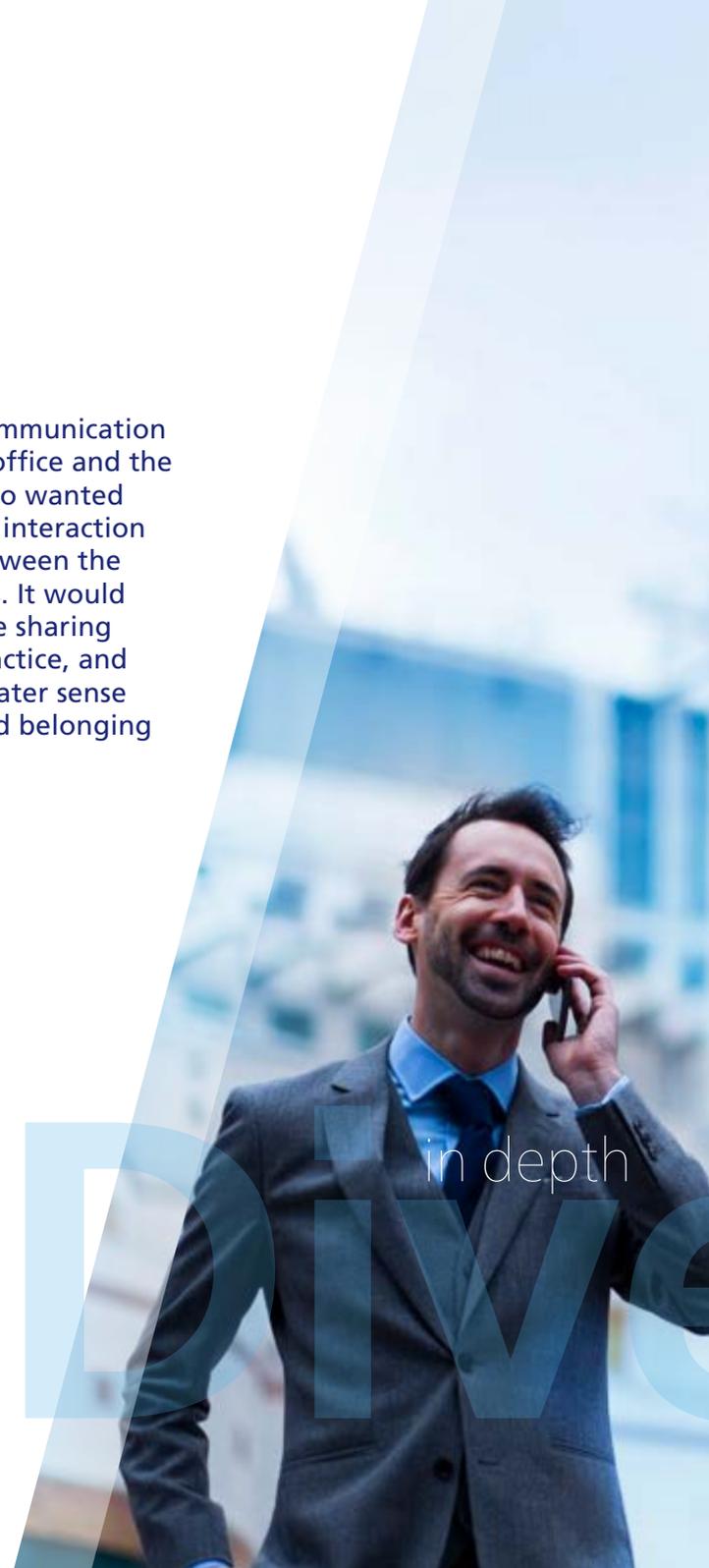
A large proportion of the FirstPort team are Development Managers based on site at retirement developments across the UK. But nearly all the communication between them and the FirstPort head office was through the post or by fax, creating a vast amount of paperwork and slowing down the day-to-day running of the business.

**“Most of the work done in the business was concerned with moving this vast beast of paper around,”** says Darren Kerwick, Group CIO for FirstPort.

**“It was labour-intensive and very expensive.**

**“But there was also a cultural problem, in that many of the people working at the remote sites were very isolated. It was difficult to create that sense of community that is so important in an organisation like ours, where there is a strong vocational aspect to what we do.**

**“We wanted better communication between the central office and the properties, but we also wanted to encourage greater interaction and collaboration between the managers on the sites. It would help to encourage the sharing of ideas and good practice, and generally foster a greater sense of mutual support and belonging across the company.”**



"We've moved from this very archaic and inefficient way of working to a very modern, leading edge 4G tablet experience."

## The Solution:

This was a comprehensive migration from paper to digital. Tablets, email and Office 365 replaced the post and fax.

FirstPort opted for a leap into the digital age. In consultation with O<sub>2</sub>, they chose to equip more than 1400 people with Samsung Galaxy tabs running Office 365. In less than ten weeks, FirstPort's way of working moved from the mailbag to the cloud.

The change was preceded by consolidation of all our Fixed, Mobile and WAN infrastructure to one supplier as a managed service.

"The future-proofing of platforms, the convergence between mobile telephony and fixed line telephony are all key to improving our service delivery at FirstPort," says Darren Kerwick.

"By partnering with O<sub>2</sub>, we can work with the same partner for our fixed line telephony, our data centre, our application layer, and our devices and technology management.

"We've moved from this very archaic and inefficient way of working to a very modern, leading-edge 4G tablet experience.

"It allows our people to be highly mobile around the developments and, most importantly, to spend more time with their residents.

"Office 365 is actually the key to this because it gives us a consistent Office platform across all our devices and across all our business. It also provides resilience in terms of disaster recovery, because it's in the cloud.

"Above all, it also gives our people access to the standard tools they need to do their jobs. This was the real driver of transformation for us: the chance to achieve a step change in the quality and consistency of the service we provide to our customers."

in depth

DIV



"This will help us enormously in the future to understand where to focus our effort in a targeted, accurate way."

## The Benefits

"Honesty, openness and transparent delivery are very key for us in terms of service with O<sub>2</sub>. The ability to mobilise quickly was great."

"O<sub>2</sub>'s ability to deliver from a strategic perspective, and from the practical day-to-day point of view, was very important for us in terms of our ambition to deliver consistently excellent customer experiences," says Darren Kerwick. "We partnered with O<sub>2</sub> because not only can they provide the technology, the process and the systems, but they're also willing partners in delivering our vision."

"It allowed us to mobilise 1400 tablets in about 10 weeks, with a support package around it, which we felt no other company would be able to do."

"The other thing that this gives us is the ability to capture management information, with dashboards that allow us to see exactly where we are with our landlords and our residents in line with our service delivery goals."

"And with our transformed infrastructure, we now have the ability to distribute video communications from the management team, which helps build the community across the company."

"We could cherry-pick the best parts of the experience from other people who have been there before with O<sub>2</sub>, and build a solution that we are very happy with today."

in depth

DIY



# FirstPort

Digital transformation through O<sub>2</sub> to deliver world-class customer experiences and eliminate outdated processes



“This is a real breakthrough for us. It has allowed us to use technology to underpin our customer service strategy, which is what we’re trying to do at FirstPort: to give our customers an improved and more efficient service.”

**Darren Kerwick**, CIO, FirstPort

We’d love to hear from you. To find out more about how O<sub>2</sub> can help your organisation, just contact your Account Manager, visit [o2.co.uk/enterprise](http://o2.co.uk/enterprise) or call us on 01235 433 507

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