



## CASE STUDY

# Exciting expansion plans for Prama made a reality with help from BMcAzurri

A world where no-one is unfairly disadvantaged or excluded, because of age or infirmity, and where every person can enjoy life as they age.

Prama is a registered charity providing domiciliary care services in Dorset, a range of clubs and activities in local communities and pre-loved goods through its network of charity shops. Founded in 1982, the Christian-based charity came into existence primarily to support the needs of recently discharged hospital patients requiring care, with help provided by a handful of local church volunteers. Their aim is to help older people, vulnerable adults and people with acquired brain injury to live independently in their own home with the outstanding care they need and deserve.

They actively encourage support from family and friends and aim to create links with the local community through a range of community services. As well as providing domiciliary care services across Dorset (PramaCARE), Prama offers a range of clubs and activities in local communities (PramaLIFE), provides an international voice at events and conferences for the human rights of older people and dementia friendly communities (PramaVOICE) whilst also selling pre-loved goods through its innovatively designed charity shops, which fund all their charitable donations.

This combination of activities makes Prama an extremely unique, innovative and forward-thinking charity, but also requires a much bigger network of support! That's why in the 35 years since its inception, their volunteer family has grown to over 100 and they now employ over 300 staff working out of a Head Office in Poole and local offices in Blandford and Kinson. The charity also operates seven shops in Ringwood, Poole, West Moore, Kinson, Tuckton, Parkstone and Ashley Cross.

With great successes to date, a clear vision for the future and exciting expansion plans in mind, Prama has never been in a stronger position.



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## The Challenge

### SUPPORTING EXPANSION AND CHANGE

BMc Azurri first started working with Prama in 2014, when they decided to install their first till system. With 4 shops at the time, the charity recognised the need to move from cash registers to a till system that would be volunteer friendly, whilst enabling improved reporting, Gift Aid collection and support their plans to grow their estate of shops. After assessing a number of supplier solutions, they chose BMc Azurri's popular Managed Service Solution.

Recently, the charity has expanded its network of shops, opening a further two over the last year in Poole and Ringwood. Prama was keen to move away from the traditional charity shop layout and have created a fresh, modern feel to their new stores. By using vintage apple crates as shelving and recycled wood planks for the till area, not only do the new stores look great, they cost significantly less than a standard shop refit.

To support the continued growth and development of the business, Prama appointed Karen Potheary to take on the role of Retail Manager, bringing with her extensive charity retail experience.

## The BMc Azurri Solution

### SYSTEM UPGRADES

When Karen joined Prama, one of her key priorities was to improve the quality of reporting, so that managers could easily identify their bestselling lines, weed out the poor performing ones and make localised decisions based on their own individual shopping environment. BMc Azurri worked closely with Karen and the team to make the necessary improvements to the system to create increased visibility, analysis and reporting.

### BARCODE PRINTING

As with many projects of this nature, there were unexpected challenges and the move to new printers across existing stores wasn't as simple as first thought. However, the team at BMc Azurri were experienced at facing such challenges and ensured that the transition to the new printing system was conducted with minimal disruption.

New store set-ups were much simpler and with a new store ready to open in Poole, the Gift Aid printing system was installed and ready to go on launch day.

"The till-side printers make such a difference to the staff and how they think about Gift Aid in general. It also makes the physical processing and sorting of goods against Gift Aid registrations much quicker. It's a combination of the training and mindset that results in greater sign-ups and the technology just makes the process even simpler," explains BMc Azurri's Jeff Smith.

### TRAINING

BMc Azurri provided Gift Aid training in December 2016 and again in April 2017, along with barcode printer training. Following this additional training in Gift Aid, Prama have virtually doubled their Gift Aid sign-ups over just 6 months, from the current rate at the time of 12% to a much healthier 23%.

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## The Results

Feedback from the volunteers across all seven of Prama's charity shops was that they 'loved the system'. The simplicity of the touchscreen and functionality meant that if a mistake was made, it could easily be amended. With an average of 25 volunteers in each shop and one with over 40, this ease of use was vital to ensuring the smooth adoption of the system across the estate.

BMcAzurri's system made Prama's Gift Aid much more traceable and easy to manage. The new stores, Ringwood and Poole, are now trading at 16% and 17% respectively. This shows great promise for the new shops, and Prama will be able to build on this as footfall and customer loyalty increases. Prama has three existing shops that now sit at 30% + on Gift Aid, which is a great result for the charity and for maximising charity fundraising capabilities.

The impact of Gift Aid on the charity has been immediate, with sales going out onto the shop floor faster as there's no need for a form to be produced every time Gift Aid stock is received into the store. Productivity of stock has increased and sales have also risen.

For Prama's Director of Operations Paula Jones, the technical support provided by BMcAzurri has been second to none.

"Andy and the team really do bend over backwards to help us and the team are all really good with our volunteers. Many providers wouldn't go the lengths that BMcAzurri have gone when we've had issues. They'll stick with us until the problem is resolved," says Paula.

For Karen, as Retail Manager, the personal relationship she has with the team at BMcAzurri is vital to the smooth running of their retail operations and the confidence this provides when faced with unexpected challenges.

"I have huge confidence in the team at BMcAzurri and much of this is down to the relationship we have developed working on various projects together. Knowing I can just pick up the phone at any time and get an immediate response to any problems or concerns is immensely reassuring and brings a lot to us as a charity. Implementing new systems like Gift Aid bring with them more than just the system itself and BMcAzurri handle all the administration side of our Gift Aid provision too, something we just don't have capacity to do in-house. They really are an extension of our team," explains Karen.

## Looking to the Future

Prama is actively looking for new premises and has clear visions to grow their estate. If they can find the right premises, the charity is also considering opening a furniture shop. Their expansion plans include spreading into east Dorset and Hampshire, doubling the number of shops, which in turn will increase the income for their PramaLIFE activity in a sustainable way. There are also plans to expand into charitable work, rather than just domiciliary care.

"What we have achieved in the past year has provided us with a solid foundation for the next five years," explains Karen.

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