

One-to-one with Nicola De Blasi

MPS Monitor has formed a UK entity directly owned and managed by its headquarters in Italy. Michelle Ryder caught up with CEO Nicola De Blasi to find out more about the company's plans to expand its footprint across the UK, Ireland and the Nordics

Michelle Ryder (MR): It's been 18 months since you first entered the UK market, and you've certainly not stood still. How has business been and what led you to establish MPS Monitor UK Ltd?

Nicola De Blasi (NDB): 2020 was the best year in our history, we reported a 40 per cent year on year revenue growth. We've enjoyed huge growth worldwide in terms of the platform's adoption, numbers of dealers and devices. In the UK specifically, we have achieved a significant uplift in terms of brand awareness and visibility, and that's largely down to our marketing activities driven by Marketing Director Pietro Renda. I can safely say our performance has exceeded my expectations.

The UK is an important market for MPS Monitor – we have grown numbers and revenue but we can still do much more. Our past success in other countries and markets in Europe, the Americas and Asia, has shown us the value of having a local presence. We have spoken to UK dealers and our partners to try to understand why we are growing from an awareness point of view, but not from a numbers point of view – and it became clear that we had to establish a UK entity.

Now, with MPS Monitor UK Ltd, we are in a much stronger position to execute a tailored, local go-to-market strategy focused on delivering our platform's vision and value to dealers and managed print providers. Importantly, with this move, we are also making it much easier to transact with us. Dealers can sign a contract with a UK firm and we have established local

accounting and administration services, thus simplifying invoicing and payment processes in local currency for our UK-based customers.

MR: In just a few short months, you have got the operation up and running and you've engaged a team of seasoned professionals.

NDB: Yes, things have happened very quickly. We have appointed print industry expert Ian McRae, as a board member of MPS Monitor UK Ltd. Ian is widely considered to be one of the UK's and Europe's most experienced print monitoring business leaders. To complete the board of directors, we have appointed Rebekah Mundy, MCIPD, as HR Director. Rebekah has over 25 years of experience in senior HR roles, 14 years of which have been spent in the print monitoring software arena.

Michael Seistrup, has joined as head of sales. He has extensive channel experience and in a former role was himself an enthusiastic MPS Monitor user! Michael has also got strong connections in the Nordics, which is another key region for MPS Monitor. Lee Kerr has been appointed technical implementation manager with responsibility for supporting our dealer customers from the initial engagement right through to deployment and follow-up.

It was important for us to have the full team in place right from the beginning so that our customers receive the highest levels of pre- and post-sales consultancy from their very first engagement with us. I'm very confident that the team's combined experience will help fast-track the company's growth and ensure that the newly created entity has the best resources, skills and experience to make a positive and long-lasting impact on the dealer community



Nicola De Blasi

in the UK, Ireland and Nordics.

MR: It's fair to say that UK dealers are used to utilising monitoring solutions, how easy is it for managed print providers to migrate to MPS Monitor?

NDB: Print is evolving and needs modern monitoring solutions that deliver a fresh and new perspective to effectively address the ongoing challenges of security, print transparency and cost control. Businesses in the UK, Ireland and the Nordics are receptive to embracing print management solutions that deliver against their changing requirements. This makes the UK a terrific place to invest in order to respond to growing demand from businesses located in these countries. Furthermore, these countries

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(l-r) Lee Kerr, Michael Seistrup, Nicola De Blasi and Ian McRae

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have some of the most mature print ecosystems, and they are a hotbed for print innovation and innovative service and support.

You are absolutely right that UK dealers are very familiar with monitoring technologies. We are confident that we can rapidly bring the tangible benefits and value of MPS Monitor to customers based in these territories. We are absolutely geared to drive and support dealers and managed print providers in their migration journey from legacy and old solutions towards a better future of innovation, integration and security.

That's why we developed our migration campaign. Our commitment to serving locally-based channel partners is reflected in the development of this intense marketing campaign that aims to create strong relationships that will be managed by the sales and pre-sales force of the new company. The sustained campaign is supported by local language assets that range from a Migration eBook, to adverts, videos, LinkedIn content, case studies, PR activities, newsletters, blog posts, and a dedicated website.

MR: Over the past year you have invested heavily in the platform, announcing a number of new integrations and new capabilities. Can you tell me a little bit about the most recent developments?

NDB: At MPS Monitor we focus on three key areas – innovation, integration and security. We strive to be innovative in our approach – we have developed a modern user interface for the platform and we offer advanced business intelligence.



MPS Monitor Analytics is a complete business intelligence platform based on Microsoft PowerBI technology that provides granular and aggregate visibility to virtually all the data and events related to customers' print environments. It enables customers to create business intelligence reports, dashboards and interactive visualisations to make faster and more effective business decisions on their customers' and devices' data.

In terms of integration, we have forged partnerships with many technology leaders – including HP Inc. for its HP Smart Device Services (SDS), Microsoft, Okta and Asolvi. The platform offers direct integration with Microsoft Universal Print, which allows printing from zero trust networks via single sign-on while Okta Identity integration enables users to sign on across domains with a single online identity, further increasing security. We have added further value by enabling dealers using Asolvi ERP solutions to benefit from a deep integration of the monitoring platform into their systems.

Security is another key focus area, our platform offers a robust set of security features and capabilities to protect data, users and infrastructure. The company has achieved ISO/IEC 27001 certification and in April 2021, we successfully completed the System and Organization Controls 2 Type 1 (SOC 2 Type 1) examination. This accreditation confirms our security practices and controls meet the Trust Services Criteria for security, availability and confidentiality.

MR: You mentioned earlier that 2020 was the best year in the company's history, but you also ended 2021 on a high winning the PrintIT Award for Device Management Solution of the year! What's on the agenda for 2022?

NDB: Yes we were very proud to receive the PrintIT Award!

MPS Monitor was founded on a vision of how best to help dealers and MPS providers manage print. Through a combination of our focus on innovation,

integration and security, we help dealers and MPS resellers improve service levels and reduce costs, our platform also helps to optimise dealer operations and improve overall service margins.

The platform is feature-rich and we will continue our focus on bringing added value to our customers. If we consider the events of the pandemic, because MPS Monitor is cloud-based we were able to quickly and easily accommodate the changes imposed upon businesses globally – such as the move to a remote working model – which has changed how and where print happens, how it is managed and how it is accounted for. In 2022, we will continue to meet the needs of dealers and MPS providers with our easy to use platform, and further enhance MPS Monitor's capabilities to leverage advanced BI and analytics, AI, identity management and SSO – as well as proprietary technologies such as HP SDS for remote maintenance and advanced serviceability.

We strive to be the most integrated platform in the market – and we will continue to build on the strong partnerships we have. We will also shortly announce a new integration with PaperCut that will provide PaperCut customers with advanced BI and advanced features in MPS Monitor.

Security is paramount for us, we are always improving, and you have to keep evolving.

We are proud that after performing a detailed assessment of our security methodology as well as the platform's security policies and procedures, Keypoint Intelligence validated that our security approach, methodology and the main procedures we apply, provide robust and industry leading security for users. The report is clear, outlining security best practices – the things that dealers should do in terms of keeping their customers secure. It's almost a checklist that dealers should be asking their suppliers and it confirms that the MPS Monitor platform is proven to be able to maintain customer devices in a secure posture through proactive and automated management of key device settings, and that it provides a deeply tested DCA technology that fulfils its customers' most stringent security requirements.

I'm looking forward to building on our success in 2022 and beyond.

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