



leisure



**ClarityLive**  
**Leisure**

Part of the Omnico Group

Boosting member engagement  
with online service – a trailblazing  
approach by Sandwell Leisure Trust

# Sandwell Leisure Trust case study



Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) operates 10 leisure sites for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council in the West Midlands. It has upgraded its leisure management system to ClarityLive, in order to maximise membership levels and service performance at its impressive range of leisure facilities.

ClarityLive was selected, based on price competitiveness, support arrangement and the positive partnership already in place with Omnico's team

A long-term Omnico customer originally using the company's legacy software, SLT evaluated ClarityLive alongside rival systems from Gladstone and Delta. ClarityLive was selected, based on price competitiveness, support arrangements, and the positive partnership already in place with Omnico's team.

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As a trailblazer in the use of technology-driven service, SLT wanted to continue to enhance customer engagement through IT. The ClarityLive eJoining module has been instrumental in this, giving customers easy access to online self-service facilities, powering membership scheme growth, and achieving real administrative efficiencies.

- Consistent year-on-year membership scheme growth
- Thousands of online membership sign ups
- Flexible, field-based sales strategy enabled
- “Massive” staff time savings – back office as well as front of house
- Significant cost savings on printed membership documentation
- Reduced queues /entry hold-ups
- Better customer engagement & service standards

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## Sandwell Leisure Trust

Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) is a social enterprise company and registered charity setup in 2004. With 400 employees and an annual turnover approaching £8m, SLT serves a population of around 309,000 people.

The trust's remit includes sports development and outreach work, in order to maximise leisure participation and health benefits. Facilities include the newly opened Tipton Leisure Centre, an £8 million flagship facility featuring swimming pools, a state-of-the-art dance and fitness studio, extensive classes programme and a 54 station gym. The £18 million Portway Lifestyle Centre is another brand new SLT leisure facility, opening in Sept 2013.

## The Challenge

Sandwell had used Omnicore's legacy software since 2000. It knew that Omnicore's ClarityLive solution had moved capabilities forward considerably, but the trigger for change was a council-wide IT review. It wanted to ensure that it was gaining maximum value and service efficiency through its IT infrastructure, and it subsequently externalised its IT management arrangements.

In 2012 Sandwell addressed its leisure management system needs, and evaluated solutions from Gladstone and Delta, as well as Omnicore's ClarityLive. As a visit to Sandwell Leisure Trust's website shows, online service access is a cornerstone of its approach, so sourcing an IT solution that would build on this philosophy was crucial.

Mark Wildman, SLT's Marketing & Business Manager, says, "At that time, we saw Gladstone as the tried and tested market solution. We were aware of ClarityLive but we wanted to wait until it was better established, see which organisations had adopted it, and hear about their experiences."

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## Omnico solution

At the end of the product evaluation, SLT found ClarityLive to be the most competitive in terms of cost – especially on the support side.

“We found Omnico’s tender refreshingly straightforward. ClarityLive was relatively new to the market then, but equally it was very modern and user friendly, and we could see further progress on the product development front. Continuity of service with Omnico appealed to us, too,” says Mark Wildman.

SLT purchased the eJoining module alongside the core ClarityLive platform. eJoining was a critical component, giving customers online self-service facilities while maximising administrative efficiency.

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## Mark Wildman – SLT Marketing & Business Manager

### Collaboration

“The team behind ClarityLive has worked as hard as we have to get the product working in exactly the way we want,” comments Mark Wildman, adding, “it’s important to us to have suppliers like Omnico that are willing to work collaboratively. It’s also great how Omnico works with partners like Cascade – we enjoy a strong reporting capability as a result.”

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## Results

SLT reports wide-ranging efficiencies and performance gains since implementing ClarityLive, placing particular value on the benefits of the eJoining module. Empowering customers with an online, automated, self-service membership process has not only improved the customer experience, but resulted in immediate business efficiency gains.

### **“Massive” time and cost savings**

Marketing & Business Manager, Mark Wildman, states, “The eJoining process is so much quicker and easier to administer – it’s created a massive time saving for our staff.” In fact, SLT estimates that the back office business support requirement has been reduced by the equivalent of 1 full time staff member, while further time savings are made at the reception desk.

“Adopting eJoining has also reduced our costs on the printing of membership related documentation, application forms etc – we’ve easily saved several thousand pounds on this,” says Mark Wildman, continuing, “And by enabling customers to join online, we’ve done away with the need to run dedicated membership desks at our leisure centres.”

““ The eJoining process is so much quicker and easier to administer - its created a massive time saving for our staff ””

### **Mark Wildman – SLT Marketing & Business Manager**

Previously, SLT found that front desk hold-ups caused by manual membership applications impacted business: it discouraged repeat visits, caused customer complaints, and reduced service standards on other important service tasks such as answering the phone. eJoining has helped address all these concerns.

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## **Flexibility and mobile sales innovation**

The flexibility offered by eJoining has also helped SLT to convert sales more quickly, driving membership to new levels: thousands of members have signed-up online using eJoining. Omnico's Andrew Marshall estimates that a sales uplift of just 3 members per month achieves a positive return on investment for eJoining.

By deploying the software on tablet devices, SLT has mobilised the sales function. Staff attend events like community days, school and corporate events, proactively signing-up members on the spot. "We go out into the community and let people join where they are," enthuses Mark Wildman. This mobility has also proved effective at induction sessions for casual gym users, where the convenience of having joining facilities available on a PC has accelerated sign-ups.

## **Online service focus**

SLT has incentivised customers to join online with a 50% discount on the initial membership fee. This offer has been comprehensively communicated with the help of Facebook campaigns, a high profile on SLT's website, SMS messages, radio advertising and sales literature.

Reinforcing its innovative approach, SLT has created an iPhone app to keep abreast of its latest leisure offers, and its website features a membership calculator tool to help customers see the savings and benefits of joining. It has also invested in sales training for staff, ensuring that they own customer relationships and do not pressure customers in the way a third party might do.

"It's as much about our social objectives as anything," comments Mark Wildman, "we want to encourage participation by demonstrating value, and by being honest and open in the way we engage with customers." As a result of all these initiatives, SLT's membership has been growing at around 7%p.a., with a total of around 18,000 members according to SLT's most recent annual report.

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## Conclusion

Sandwell Leisure Trust's CEO, Paul Slater comments, "Alongside Sandwell's investment in exciting new leisure facilities, we have focused on equipping SLT with the right IT products and business partners. Omnico has worked closely with us to develop and implement ClarityLive in a way that supports our team, our business and our social objectives."

Kevin Anson, Omnico's Divisional Director for Leisure concludes, "Our eJoining module is a powerful tool for organisations seeking the broad customer and commercial benefits of online service access. We're very pleased that ClarityLive is proving its ROI so clearly with large, dynamic operators like Sandwell Leisure Trust."

## who are omnico?

Omnico Group enables leading brands to strengthen their customer relationships and grow revenue by delivering an innovative, joined-up customer experience across all channels.



**250,000**  
installations worldwide

**uk's biggest provider  
of EPOS solutions**

**market leading  
technologies**

software, hardware, mobile

**engaged with leading  
global brands**

retail, entertainment,  
hospitality and leisure

### Omni-Channel Expertise

- Delivering best practise Omni-Channel integration strategies – joining up the channels to provide a single view of the customer
- Ensuring functionality and connectivity at point of need – across all channels
- Providing a seamless customer journey however and wherever brand interaction occurs
- Responding with agility and creativity in delivering innovative technologies that wrap around existing infrastructure and platforms

**For further information on how we can help your organisation meet the challenges of Omni-Channel retailing, contact us:**

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- By phone on **01256 365 150**