

Re-use for affordable computing and connectivity



Company: Happus

REBM type: Repair and re-use

Sector: Electrical

Company size: SME

Product or service: Happus provides lower-income households with access to affordable computing equipment and internet services.

Key Facts

- Happus provides lower-income households with access to affordable computing equipment and internet services. It refurbishes items for sale to low-income households, or donates them to social organisations.
- Low-income households may not be able to afford computing equipment or internet access, which means they may risk becoming separated from society through lack of digital services.
- Social organisations (e.g. charities, community groups) often lack the budget to buy IT equipment that can radically change the way they work or provide a platform for the services they provide to society.
- REBus has enabled Happus to launch their project successfully and to raise awareness of its work.

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Introduction

Happus provides lower-income households with access to affordable computing equipment and internet services. It supports this activity through generating profits from standard IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) services and by refurbishing and distributing items donated by organisations that no longer need old IT equipment.

REBM for IT re-use

The aim was to develop an ITAD service where a proportion of the value of assets or a proportion of the assets themselves could be donated to lower-income households and social organisations or schools. IT equipment would either be donated directly to organisations, or listed on the Happus website at reduced prices for eligible customers.

A range of potential clients were identified during the project, including larger clients such as councils in London. Initially, they expressed interest in the Happus service, recognising that a portion of their used IT equipment would generate little resale asset value directly for them but could feasibly be passed on for social benefit & re-use through Happus.

It was necessary to demonstrate to potential clients that social benefits could be realised. Potential future clients would require evidence that the operation could work and be scalable. Customer benefits also included a secure data eradication service linked with positive social outcome from the re-use activity.

Why REBus?

Happus felt that support from REBus would help to raise awareness of its work, and also give its launch a greater chance of success.

The WRAP team enabled Happus to define its proposition. The time and investment provided has also given the company the confidence to pitch the proposition to a wide range of stakeholders.

"I want to see it work – I want to see the impact it creates".

David Williams, Managing Director, Happus

Click the link below to watch a video about how Happus aims to help their customers get affordable equipment and internet connection.



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The pilot

During the project, Happus successfully refurbished 25 desktop PCs with peripheral equipment and new hard drives donated by TalkTalk, before installing Windows 7 and Office 2010 software, and donating them to:

- Beaverbrooks community centre in Blackpool.
- The Mercy Foundation Centre in London.
- Edward Woods Community Centre in London.

The centres are now able to operate more effectively and to provide IT training and skills for community groups. This opportunity arose from TalkTalk recognising that although some of its IT equipment was unlikely to recover a high value, it was still working and could be diverted to a good social use.

Challenges

It proved difficult for Happus to access some clients; ITAD services is a competitive market and many players focus on delivering maximum value to the client, although they do not focus on socially beneficial outcomes. Additionally, clients often changed their timescale expectation for ITAD services requirements, leading to lower volumes.

Data eradication and peace of mind around security are naturally nervous areas for many clients. This can be addressed through physical destruction of the HDD (Hard Disk Drive), with evidence of a robust data trail.

It is our preference and from an re-use/impact point of view that data erasure be carried out so the drives can be used again rather than destroyed.



Desktop



Laptop



Tablet, Phone



Broadband

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Results

The results of the project can be categorised into carbon savings and social benefits.

WRAP estimates a saving of 0.199kg per kilogram of IT equipment re-used. This means that if 25 PCs and monitors at 5kg each are used, the resulting carbon benefit is 24.9kg CO2(e).

The PCs are in constant use. There are between 6 and 25 people using these machines each day, who do not have access at home. Activities involve job searches, education, learning how to use the computers, driving social interaction. Current estimates show that there are around 50 different people per week using the 20 machines. In addition, the [Government Digital Inclusion Strategy](#) calculates that families who are getting online are benefitting from savings of £560 per year, on average.

Next Steps

Happus has identified a partner with the right social match and capacity for significant expansion in 2017.

Lessons learned

Happus found that sharing networks and working with others had a significant impact on the success of the scheme.

Although the business case for re-use was relatively straight forward, margins in the market were tightening. Finding a like-minded supply partner which shared the same vision for social benefit and had the capacity to deliver the outputs and outcomes – but which needed expert advice – resulted in a valuable, mutually beneficial relationship.

Assumptions

Finding a suitable partner took time, so it was important to ensure that your team was introduced to other companies which could help to improve the strength of your offer.

A key factor contributing to the success of the project was tenacity: a belief in the vision and the personal mission that Managing Director, David Williams held. He believed that he had been a long way ahead of the curve on social benefit issues – which many in the industry had not yet embraced.

“Do your research and get to understand your market and your proposition.”

David Williams, Managing Director, Happus

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REBus is a project delivered in partnership with:



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KTN
the Knowledge Transfer Network



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Case studies were generated as a result of pilots carried out for REBus by WRAP or RWS and the named organisations from 2013 to 2016.

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