

Case Study... Eurofresh

Eurofresh discovers that money really does grow on trees with the introduction of Professional Broadband from UK Online



Pictured: Muhammad Zaman ready to do business in the early hours of the morning at his unit in New Spitalfields Market

The Eurofresh Business

Behind the scenes of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry is a large community of people who work literally through the night to put the food on our plates.

Muhammad Zaman is one of those people and, with over 10 years working with wholesale fresh produce he decided to introduce broadband to get him off his market unit and home to sleep a bit faster!

Zaman, a co-founder of the business, started the company, Eurofresh, in 2005 with two partners with whom he had worked on market units for over 10 years. They specialise in seasonal fruit and vegetables from around the globe and import some 40 different varieties – ranging from mangoes from Pakistan to spinach and coriander from Cyprus.

Based in East London, all transactions take place in the trading hub of fresh produce: New Spitalfields Market. Most of Zaman's customers are contacts he has built up during those years working in fresh produce markets – all of whom need access to seasonal, fresh produce throughout the year. These include grocer shop owners, cash and carry outlets and independent buyers for the catering and hotel industry – companies such as Seewoo Foods, which supplies over 80% of Chinese restaurants and oriental food stores in the south-east of England.



"For availability of seasonal, fresh produce all year round I need to be in regular contact with suppliers from as far as Pakistan and Cyprus. Broadband now gives me the opportunity to do that more efficiently and most importantly, cost-effectively!"

**Muhammad Zaman,
Eurofresh**

Pictured: Zaman taking email orders on his laptop while trading at 4.00am in the morning....and still there is more work to be done when the unit closes.

Eurofresh's Broadband Requirements

Zaman recognised that in order to efficiently run a business in the 21st century he must look beyond traditional 'bartering' and use some technology to ensure the figures stacked up. After considering a couple of the bigger broadband providers – which were too expensive - Zaman spotted an advertisement for UK Online whilst sitting on an underground train! Once Zaman had spoken to UK Online, things happened very fast. He explains "Past experience had shown me that it could take up to a month to receive a fully working business broadband service, but UK Online had me up and running in less than 10 days. With my mind firmly focused on my produce I had some problems setting up email addresses but the freephone technical support team had that fixed for me very quickly!"

In the lively hubbub of the 200 to 300 Spitalfields market units, most trading takes place in the early hours of the morning between unit owners and traders face to face. Typically Zaman and his two colleagues are in the market and ready to trade from 2.00am each morning. Their customers come direct to them to obtain their supplies with the inevitable lively negotiation on price. Zaman comes off his unit at around 9.00am in the morning to cash up and start his business administration which is when the benefit of broadband comes in to its own. It is at this time that Zaman does his banking online and communicates with his accountant while sitting at the computer. This has helped in running the business more smoothly and saved Zaman walks to the bank on his night-weary feet!

Benefits:

- Broadband provides electronic business administration
- Supports online banking & accounting

Zaman says "I have long and successful relationships with my customers and typically do business with between 130 to 150 of them in any one day." He adds, "Having broadband now means that I can email my customers with details of products coming into season and agree orders ahead of normal trading hours, which I couldn't do before. The most important thing is that produce is ready and waiting for them, when they arrive at the unit. This has meant that business happens more quickly and efficiently and there is more time for talking about other things with customers over a cup of tea!"

The Future

Zaman now has dedicated business email with which he can also communicate with his suppliers around the world. In addition, he hopes to add an internet calling facility in the future to save on the international call charges. This will enable him to be more efficient, while maintaining and growing his huge network of global suppliers and customers.

"Even though most of my customers come direct to me to buy their produce, Broadband has and will make a big difference to the running of Eurofresh. It will enable us to save valuable trading time and money in a climate of tight turnover, where every penny counts. We are looking forward to seeing what else we can do to ensure Eurofresh is a really modern and truly global grocery wholesale business."

About UK Online

UK Online is a broadband provider specialising in supplying professional grade internet connections to recreational, home office and small business users nationwide. UK Online recently identified that only one third of small and micro-businesses in the UK have an internet connection, thereby missing out on the commercial benefit the internet can offer. With a strong focus on customer service, UK Online is fast emerging as a leading supplier of broadband and internet services to the professional broadband sector. Unlike many providers to this market, UK Online's quoted prices include VAT.

UK Online is a pioneer of Local Loop Unbundling (LLU) for consumers and was the first UK provider to offer a national unlimited broadband service at up to 16Mb. The company's commitment to LLU was recognised by the ISP industry with a Commendation for Innovation at the 2005 ISPA Awards.

UK Online was founded in 1994. The company was acquired in 2005 by British Sky Broadcasting group, which has a total market capitalisation in excess of £9bn. As part of the Sky group, UK Online has access to a unique heritage and a world class IP network.

UK Online services are available to over 70% of the UK's homes and businesses.

For more information, visit: www.ukonline.net / Tel: **0800 053 2222**