

# Post Office Consulting

## Christmas Horizon Research Report

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*specialist consultancy from people  
who know the business*

**THE POST OFFICE**

Counters Business Consultancy  
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## 1. Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

This report gives the results of 330 telephone interviews with staff and agents whose offices have taken part in the Horizon roll in the autumn of 1999. In these interviews they were asked their opinion on different aspects of the Horizon system, the various types of support available (including manuals and helpdesks) and their overall satisfaction with the automation programme.

### 1.2 Results and Conclusions

Results on almost all aspects of Horizon are mixed. Some staff and sub postmasters are getting to grips with the system and are happy and satisfied whilst others are struggling and continuously having problems. There are no obvious patterns by office type, IP area, number of counter positions or the length of time since migration.

However, where comparisons have been possible, these results are more favourable than the results from the live trial research last June. This improvement in results indicates that lessons have been learnt from the live trial and that the remedial action taken has improved perception of several aspects of Horizon. However, the post office should not rest on its laurels and there is still room for further improvement.

The main message coming through is that they are not getting enough training. They are mainly happy with what the one and a half days they received, but the training on balancing is not long enough for their needs.

This has knock on effects in other areas where greater support as they then lack confidence when doing their subsequent balances and require more support from their HFSO and RNM. Also when asked about the user guide and helpdesks there is a feeling that if they had been trained adequately problems with these support areas would not be such an issue.

The other area for concern is the helpdesks. There is confusion over which number to call, which is compounded by them being passed back and forth between helpdesks. There is a problem getting through to the Horizon system helpdesk in particular and the service from both appears to be lacking in terms of consistency and level of knowledge.

### **1.3 Recommendation**

It is strongly recommended that the length of time allocated to balancing in the training course is extended, since there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that economising at this stage causes problems further down the line in terms of the additional support required.

Work is also under way to measure the level of service given by the helpdesks so that improvements can be made.