Techbuyer

Techbuyer is a leading provider of sustainable IT solutions. The Harrogate based company buys, tests, repairs, refurbishes and sells IT hardware, which keeps quality technology in use and maximises IT budgets. Crowned 'Circular Economy Business of the Year' at the 2020 IEMA Sustainability Impact Awards, Techbuyer has demonstrated that investing in refurbishment and reuse is a long-term, successful strategy. It won the Queen's Award for International Trade in 2020.

The challenge:

With the fast pace of technological developments, many organisations are frequently refreshing and upgrading IT hardware. This is financially costly when buying new and also has a significant cost to the planet. IT equipment contains a large proportion of steel, aluminium and plastic, which are three of the top five culprits for global greenhouse emissions and account for over 30% of worldwide industrial emissions between them. E-waste – a considerable percentage of which is IT equipment - is the fastest-growing waste stream on the planet. Virogreen suggests that the UK produces 1.5 million tonnes of this waste and only recycles 17% of it.

Techbuyer's objective is to help businesses, schools and public sector organisations maximise their IT budget, whilst extending the product life of IT equipment.

> "We do a great deal of work proving why it makes sense to choose alternative solutions to brand new IT equipment, such as our research with University of East London which proved that refurbished IT hardware provides the same performance and energy draw as new."
>
> Sustainability Lead, Astrid Wynne

The solution:

Techbuyer's business model is entirely circular. Techbuyer buys over 50,000 IT parts every month from businesses, public sector organisations and universities across the world, which would otherwise go to landfill. The team restores the IT hardware to factory settings, strips it down to component level, tests each part individually and sanitises all data.
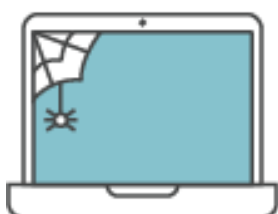
Techbuyer refurbishes and reuses over 99% of the technology it receives, with the remainder getting ethically recycled according to Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations. A range of new and quality refurbished server, storage and networking equipment, PCs and laptops are then shipped to clients across the world.

Techbuyer also launched its Laptops Refresh Service, which maximises the performance of existing laptops and desktops with component level upgrades. This has been especially useful for clients looking to upgrade remote working IT equipment. To further the secondary market, the company contributes to ground-breaking research, including a Knowledge Transfer Project with University of East London, which is developing an energy efficiency tool for data centres.

The result:

From the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March through to July 2020, sales increased by 85% compared with the previous four months, with 15% of the sales resulting in repeat business. A recent survey also revealed that 95% of new customers bought refurbished during this time, with 92% confidently buying refurbished again.

"We find that many of our customers choose refurbished because of cost and performance, rather than for sustainable reasons," says Sustainability Lead, Astrid Wynne.

Techbuyer sold over

460,000 kg

of refurbished IT equipment in 2020

"We do a great deal of work proving why it makes sense to choose alternative solutions to brand new IT equipment, such as our research with University of East London which proved that refurbished IT hardware provides the same performance and energy draw as new.

"We have seen a high growth curve as more and more organisations see the value of component level upgrades and the use of previous generations of machines. The success of our circular model has meant we can continue expanding our offering to the customer market, and maximise IT budgets in several different ways."

Inspired to start your own Circular Economy journey? Visit The Growth Hub's sustainability page