CASE STUDY

A 24-Hour IT Transformation

How A.C. Slashopt Delivered the RetailCura Cutover for 16 Marks & Spencer Stores and 3 Warehouses in Cyprus

CYPRUS • AUGUST 2026

SECURED USING PALO ALTO NETWORKS' MARKET-LEADING TECHNOLOGY

16	3	24 Hrs	1
M&S STORES CUT OVER	WAREHOUSES	WEEKEND OF AUG 1–2	UNIFIED FRANCHISE PARTNER

DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

A.C. SLASHOPT FOR END TO END SOLUTIONS | MARKS & SPENCER | paloalto NETWORKS | RetailCura

CONTENTS

01 Executive Summary ..... p. 2

02 Background: RetailCura's Partnership with M&S ..... p. 2

03 The Challenge ..... p. 3

04 Scope of Work ..... p. 3

05 Outcome ..... p. 4

06 In Their Own Words ..... p. 4

07 Testimonials ..... p. 5

01 Executive Summary

In August 2026, RetailCura Holdings Ltd, a newly formed 50:50 joint venture between long-standing Marks & Spencer franchisees Symeonides Fashion House Ltd and Voici La Mode Ltd, became Marks & Spencer's single strategic franchise partner for Cyprus and Romania, consolidating two previously separate franchise operations into one. A.C. Slashopt Ltd, the Larnaca-based IT solutions provider already serving M&S Symeonides, was the primary IT partner responsible for coordinating and project-managing the technology side of that transition: a full IT stack cutover across all 16 Marks & Spencer stores in Cyprus, completed over a single weekend by A.C. Slashopt IT team, working closely with the RetailCura team and all relevant stakeholders, and secured end-to-end using Palo Alto Networks' market-leading technology.

The stores reopened on Monday morning fully operational, with minimal downtime and no material impact to the customer experience or day-to-day operations — the outcome A.C. Slashopt's own leadership set out to achieve, as detailed below in their account of the project.

02 Background: RetailCura's Partnership with M&S

Symeonides Fashion House Ltd had operated as the M&S franchisee for Cyprus outside the Nicosia district, while Voici La Mode Ltd held the Nicosia franchise and M&S's three stores in Romania (Baneasa Shopping City, Plaza România and București Mall) since 2017. On 18 June 2026, the two companies notified Cyprus's Commission for the Protection of Competition of their intention to merge their M&S operations into a single holding company, RetailCura Holdings Ltd, owned equally by both partners.

The consolidation was formally announced in August 2026. RetailCura became M&S's exclusive strategic franchise partner across Cyprus and Romania. This aligns with M&S's stated strategy of working with “fewer, more strategic partners.” The combined business employs more than 400 people. It operates 16 M&S stores across Cyprus, supported by an online presence, as well as three stores in Romania. Further expansion is planned. RetailCura's Co-CEOs, Myria Mercouris and Michael Antoniades, and M&S Partnerships Director Richard Davies were quoted in the announcement. The plans include the introduction of a new unified loyalty programme, as well as continued investment in stores and the digital customer experience.

03 The Challenge

Merging two previously independent franchise operators into one trading entity is not just a legal and commercial exercise, it is an IT one. Two separate businesses could mean two separate point-of-sale environments, network configurations, server estates, e-commerce touchpoints and security arrangements. RetailCura needed all 16 Cyprus stores trading under a single, unified technical foundation from the moment the new structure went live, with no room for an extended transition period that would disrupt customers or colleagues during a live retail environment.

As the incumbent IT partner already supporting M&S Symeonides, A.C. Slashopt was tasked with executing the cutover across the full Cyprus estate. The transition had to be completed within the narrow window between the end of trading and the opening of the stores the following day. A.C. Slashopt coordinated and project-managed all technical workstreams, serving as the single point of accountability for the technology side of the transition.

04 Scope of Work

Across the 16 Marks & Spencer stores in Cyprus, the Slashopt team's brief covered the full IT stack, spanning over 300 assets and over 190 users:

- **Point**-of-sale (POS) systems: configuration and cutover for in-store transactions.
- **Network** and firewall infrastructure: reconfigured to bring all stores onto RetailCura's unified environment.
- **Wi-Fi infrastructure and switching**: fully replaced and reconfigured in-store, using Aruba and Ubiquiti networking technology.
- **Servers**: provisioning and migration of on-premise and cloud servers to support the consolidated operation.
- **E-commerce**: continuity of the online store presence through the transition.
- **Security**: hardening and access controls aligned to the new single-entity structure.

SECURITY TECHNOLOGY

paloalto NETWORKS

Palo Alto Networks next-generation firewalls were used, along with Palo Alto services such as Prisma SASE, GlobalProtect and Cortex, to ensure the most secure and robust solutions for RetailCura across all 16 Cyprus stores from day one.

A.C. Slashopt works exclusively with Palo Alto Networks, the market leader in cybersecurity, to secure every environment it delivers.

05 Outcome

All 16 Marks & Spencer stores in Cyprus reopened on Monday morning fully operational on RetailCura's unified IT environment, secured end to end by Palo Alto Networks, with minimal downtime and no material impact to the customer experience or day-to-day operations, as the partnership with M&S was announced publicly on 3 August 2026. The Romania stores were outside the scope of this particular cutover.

06 In Their Own Words

Following the announcement, A.C. Slashopt's COO, who was present throughout the transition, shared the following account publicly:

> “
>
> *The scale and complexity of this project should not be underestimated. The objective was to complete the entire IT transition across all locations within a single 24-hour window, allowing the stores to reopen on Monday morning as normal. The business reopened on Monday morning, fully operational, with minimal downtime and no material impact to the customer experience or day-to-day operations.*
>
> *What happens behind the scenes matters. And when it is done right, the business simply keeps moving.*
>
> ”

A.C. Slashopt
Chief Operating Officer

07 Testimonials

Following the announcement, RetailCura's General Manager, who was present throughout the transition, shared the following account publicly:

> *The launch of RetailCura marked a significant milestone for Marks & Spencer Cyprus. It was a major undertaking that demanded coordination across multiple departments, partner organisations, and hundreds of individuals. The project needed to bring together expertise from a wide range of disciplines, with technology infrastructure, networking, and cybersecurity being key pillars for establishing the new business.*
>
> *Having Slashopt as our trusted partner throughout this journey was instrumental to the project's success. Their strategic guidance, technical expertise, and unwavering support across aspects of technology enabled us to deliver a smooth and successful launch. From the initial project brief through to the go-live on the 3rd of August, and during the critical weeks that followed, the Slashopt team remained by our side, ensuring every stage of the implementation was executed seamlessly. Their professionalism, collaborative approach, and ability to respond decisively to the unforeseen challenges that inevitably arise in complex programmes proved invaluable.*
>
> *The final days leading up to launch were particularly demanding but knowing that Slashopt had deployed teams across our nationwide store network to provide immediate onsite support gave us complete confidence. As a result, we reopened our stores successfully and operated seamlessly from day one.*
>
> *Working with Slashopt feels like having a partner invested in your success. Their commitment, expertise, and willingness to go above and beyond make them an invaluable extension of your team and a trusted partner in driving your business forward.*

RetailCura Holdings Ltd
General Manager

RetailCura