

IMPROVING SMALL BUSINESS RESILIENCE

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The Prince Retail Group (PRG) is determined to bring affordable, quality grocery shopping to underserved communities across the Philippines. When the pandemic arrived and disruption after disruption hit during years following it, PRG worried that survival—much less expanding to more locations—would be impossible.

Luckily, PRG had taken early steps and constantly adapted to ensure they could weather the imminent and sometimes literal storms.

Their first, decisive action to fortify their resilience was transferring their main servers to the ePLDT Vitro data center network in 2018. Trusting their servers to the country's largest data center network empowered PRG to continue operating amidst the upcoming disasters.

For example, when 2020's lockdowns restricted mobility and 2021's Typhoon Odette damaged some of their Visayas branches, their stores stayed open because their servers seamlessly ran their merchandising and financial applications uninterrupted.

Safeguarding their servers was only the beginning. PRG took further action to compensate for COVID19's game changing effects.

When lockdowns limited face-to-face collaboration, PRG facilitated new ways to work with **ePLDT's Calling for Microsoft Teams**. Through Teams, PRG employees could flexibly collaborate anytime and from anywhere.

PRG also maximized **ePLDT's Microsoft 365 solutions** to derive useful insights from its reports and dashboards, automate their manual workflows, and program mini applications. In fact, their Microsoft Power Platforms' usage indicator is well above the industry benchmark.

PRG's ceaseless digital transformation allowed it to stay on track when meeting their expansion goals. By Q1 2023, PRG estimated they would be able to open their 100th store in the near future.

It would have been easy for the company to become complacent at this point. PRG, however, knows that if an organization does not innovate, their resilience will drain away. The company is already planning ahead and is exploring other ePLDT solutions, such as an **AI-enabled price optimization, customer personalization, and upgraded warehouse management system**, to further strengthen their business.

"With or without the pandemic, technology is an integral part of our business. In fact, we cannot run without technology, without the internet, [and] without ePLDT services."

Rhea Janice Go-Lao,
Chief Operating Officer,
Prince Retail Group

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