

Case Study - Freeth Cartwright LLP

Outsourcing facilitates electronic working environment

Overview

Client: **Freeth Cartwright LLP**

Number of offices: **5**

Number of staff: **497**

Freeth Cartwright LLP is one of the UK's leading regional law firms with solicitors operating from offices in Nottingham, Birmingham, Derby, Leicester, and Manchester. Their client base includes Center Parcs, Barratt Homes Limited, Aldi Stores Limited and local authority organisations such as the East Midlands Legal Consortium. They also have a large private client department.

Quiss Technology was initially awarded the contract for managing their IT infrastructure in 2001, and since then, Freeth Cartwright acknowledge that their involvement has played a large part in their expansion and success.

Background

Freeth Cartwright was formed by the merger of smaller legal practices and when Peter Smith was appointed as Chief Executive, he believed that their IT systems needed to be upgraded. The system was poor, suffered from a lack of investment and did not meet the requirements of a modern firm. There had also been a number of changes to existing IT personnel and, as a result, the system lacked consistency.

'Our partnership with Quiss has enabled us to revolutionise the way we do business'



Peter Smith, Chief Executive, Freeth Cartwright LLP

Staff, especially fee earners, had suffered from a lack of training and there was a need for better understanding of IT by some of the partners. New document and case management systems had been introduced, however there was an incomplete uptake of the systems. The management team decided that they needed a complete IT function with a full upgrade of hardware and software. They wanted to move ahead very quickly with access to a professional team allied to the resources and expertise needed, and this was not going to be possible with their existing staff.

Solution

The partners at Freeth Cartwright were highly impressed with the complete Works outsourcing solution put forward by Quiss Technology and awarded them a three-year contract. The entire infrastructure was replaced and users upgraded to the latest versions of Microsoft Office applications and the Arista case management system. This was quickly implemented across the existing 6 offices.

The benefits of their new system with a robust infrastructure were soon apparent; users appreciated

having a stable system which was supported by on-site technical staff and a dedicated helpdesk.

Key to the success was a tailored training program. Quiss provided dedicated on-site trainers to deliver courses based on the firm's applications, which were followed by floor-walking sessions to help and encourage staff to take full advantage of the new infrastructure.

Electronic Working

Peter Smith has driven forward an Electronic Working Initiative. Since taking up his role, he has realised that user effectiveness would be much improved if documents and emails could be stored and retrieved quickly in an electronic environment, thus reducing the need for paper files.

Their in-house development team have created award-winning software and were awarded 'Fee Earner Desktop/Portal of the Year' in the Legal Technology Awards 2008.

Peter comments "the real benefit of our current system has been our capability to implement a fully electronic working environment. All documents and emails are now

stored electronically, which is of crucial benefit. Emails stored electronically within a case have grown from 843 in January 2006 to currently around 30,000 a month. The number of documents being scanned into the system is now 100,000 a month. This has had a huge impact on our efficiency. Communications between offices is now excellent and there is a great reduction in the dependence on paper. The training provided by Quiss at each office has been fundamental to the implementation".

Benefits

Freeth Cartwright has benefited from the extensive project and consultancy services that are included in the Works solution. They have needed to invoke the Disaster Recovery plan a number of times. On one occasion, all the servers were stolen from an office and Quiss was able to restore functionality within 24 hours. The impact of a serious flood at another office involved re-locating to alternative offices, once again testing the disaster recovery procedures in place, which were a total success.

The partnership between the two organisations has flourished and the out-sourcing contract has been renewed a number of times. As Freeth Cartwright have achieved significant growth, they have moved to larger premises in Nottingham, Derby and Leicester and have opened new offices in Birmingham and Manchester. In each case, Quiss has provided the planning and support they needed, enabling staff to concentrate on their business.

The volume of data stored by the firm has increased exponentially and is hosted on a SAN storage system. They now enjoy the reassurance of a robust and flexible storage facility where data can be restored quickly if needed and sufficient redundancy to allow for future growth.

Peter Smith appreciates the busi-

ness relationship the firm has with Quiss staff. He explains "I am very impressed with the consistency of Quiss's service. I appreciate being able to build good business relationships with Quiss staff, who are not subject to rapid turnover. They provide a professional service and always work hard and are proving very helpful when fixing problems.

They are always responsive to changes in our business and we make good use of the consultancy element of the contract, which means that we never need to find a contact. They provide us with excellent assistance in identifying and implementing changes in the firm".

Freeth Cartwright's IT Manager, Chris Nicholson is also pleased with the service delivered by Quiss. He comments "I know that I can leave the day-to-day management of our systems to Quiss, leaving me free to concentrate on new developments within our organisation. The help-desk staff are excellent and problem resolution very fast".

Another key contact for the Quiss Project Team is Simon Owen, the Accounts Manager, who has worked with them on a major upgrade of the Axxia system to an Artiion server. "The upgrade was well planned and Quiss liaised well with our third party supplier" he remarked.

All are agreed that the partnership has worked well, with tangible benefits accruing, and both parties remain keen to ensure that future projects are every bit as successful.



Freeth
Cartwright
LLP



Freeth Cartwright Computer Room

Latest Technologies Deployed

SAN (Storage Area Network)
Provides the organisation with a centralised, flexible, easily expanded data storage capacity, used for all offices. The system is easily expanded to cater for future growth needs.

Data is replicated (copied) to an off-site location giving an up-to-date copy giving more resilience using the latest technology Online snapshots of live data are retained enabling faster restores if necessary for any reason.

COMMS

100 Mbps lines to Leicester and Derby offices giving fast speed and greater efficiencies.

REMOTE WORKING

A large percentage of workstations are now laptops with facilities for remote working and docking.

DIGITAL DICTATION

The firm uses fully electronic digital dictation using integrated network, independent and Blackberry devices.

Microsoft
GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner

Since our launch as a specialist IT service provider in 1988, we have strived to deliver only the best solutions. To find out more about any of our services, please contact us and we will be delighted to discuss your requirement further.

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