



Corporate Residential Management (CRM) banks on application hosting service to minimise IT overhead for new business venture business

Oxford-based property management company Corporate Residential Management (CRM) required a complete IT solution that would be fully operational in just a matter of weeks, following a management buy out from its parent company.

Solution Summary

Situation

CRM needed a fully functional, managed IT solution to be live within two weeks of their MBO. The solution needed to be capable of scaling quickly to meet the aggressive growth plans of the business, without proving cost prohibitive.

Solution

Intercept provides a fully managed 'virtual' IT service, where all CRM's data and applications are delivered securely from a central location.

Benefits

- › No need for IT staff to be employed by CRM.
- › No additional hardware was needed
- › All software applications automatically upgraded to latest versions
- › New offices and staff connected within minutes
- › Remote users able to connect to all corporate data from any location
- › Simple monthly budgeting and no more unexpected IT costs
- › Fully inclusive IT helpdesk for support

The Challenge

Once CRM had completed the MBO, it not only faced the challenge of transferring all its relevant business assets, but also needed to find an IT solution capable of running and supporting all of the legacy software applications previously utilised, as well as a number of new ones. Being effectively a new financial venture, a major factor was the associated cost.

CRM faced a huge challenge when it came to timescales. It had only a few weeks before needing to be fully operational, in order to minimise the impact on any existing Customers taken on as part of the MBO. Unfortunately, the computer equipment included within the buy out was extremely dated and to complicate matters further, CRM's business critical software application and associated data was still being hosted on servers at the previous Parent Company.

Although actually a new business, CRM was still servicing numerous existing customers, such as Schroeder, ING, UK Prime Student Fund, Unilever, Tesco and Land Securities. As a result, there was a strong need to provide continuity of service, with a perceived seamless transfer of the business, in order to retain Customer loyalty. If this could not be delivered, CRM faced the loss of its major customers, which would obviously have a catastrophic effect on the business.

The growth area within the business was the Management of Student Halls of Residence. With each new contract secured, new sites needed to be added to the IT infrastructure as quickly and seamlessly as possible. These sites needed to provide staff with easy access to CRM's core business data and software applications.

As CRM relied heavily on its Property Management System, the legacy IT set-up had hindered rather than aid progress towards these goals.

The Solution

Following CRM's decision to use Intercept's OnlineDesktop service as its chosen IT solution, the business was migrated to the new environment. After installing and testing CRM's custom applications, all existing data was migrated to a Storage Area Network (SAN) and in less than two weeks the solution was fully up and running. There were no detrimental effects to the business, staff were able to carry on with work as usual and CRM's clients were serviced as if there had been no change. However, staff at CRM instantly found that there was a noticeable improvement in the speed and performance of IT services. In addition, home working could be implemented, enabling CRM to provide a more flexible working environment for its key staff.

Another major benefit of utilising OnlineDesktop was that CRM was able to continue using all of its legacy PC's, which were a mixture of Windows 95, 98 and 2000 machines. Direct access to the Internet was disabled from all PC's and users were forced to browse through OnlineDesktop. This enabled CRM to benefit from an Internet monitoring and filtering system which restricts staff from visiting unauthorised web sites. As a variety of reports could also be generated, they were also able to enforce employment policies relating to use of their IT systems.

As a result, CRM has been able to accurately predict its monthly IT costs and offer a more responsive, stable IT service to its employees and more focused service to its clients.

The Expectation Exceeded

Keith White, Managing Director at CRM commented:

"The impact OnlineDesktop had on my business was immediate, right from the first day of our new venture. OnlineDesktop delivered all our applications and data to staff and zero productivity was lost.

I have been able to connect new offices and staff instantly as my business has developed. All I need to do is arrange for Internet access, contact the Intercept helpdesk and they do the rest.

I am able to provide remote access to all my staff as and when necessary, which helps them to be more productive and agile, enjoying a better work life balance than previously. This is extremely important to me in an industry where staff turnover is traditionally high.

I no longer have to worry about data or productivity loss and we can now access our corporate data instantly and easily from any location. The inherent benefits of OnlineDesktop have already enabled me to expand my business and with the subscription based payment model, there is less financial impact, as we are able to accurately predict our IT costs as we grow.

In short, I would strongly recommend Intercept's OnlineDesktop service to any company who uses IT as a critical part of their business".

"Intercept's OnlineDesktop has given us a superior managed IT solution that has scaled quickly and seamlessly, meeting all the needs of our working environment.

The secure, flexible access to all of our data and applications undoubtedly aids productivity and this is helping us facilitate the expansion of CRM."

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