

Case Study: The Big Event

Company Background:

Our company is an events consultancy has been growing steadily for a number of years. From our humble beginnings (with just me doing everything), we have grown to a team of 13.

Like many companies I focused the company on winning new business where IT wasn't that important. As we grew, we grew organically. We bought a new PC or laptop as the need arose and relied on basic email facilities (POP3) from our ISP to communicate with each other. About 4 years ago we moved into a new office in London, and hired a consultant to install a server to share our documents, improve our email system (Microsoft Exchange) and connect all the PC's together to share documents and printers etc.

It cost us around £8,400.00 to get us all connected and opted to manage the system ourselves. The consultant used Microsoft Small Business Server 2003, which seemed the best value for money on the market. However things started to crack at the foundations four years on from the install.

Our Problem:

Our system turned from an ally into a part time enemy. To explain a little more:

- The server began to become 'unavailable' during the most important parts of the day
- We were beginning to see documents deleted by mistake and did not have any backups in place to recover them
- Sensitive management documents were being accessed by staff
- We needed to be able to access our email when out of the office
- Some computers did not have any anti-virus software on them and those that did were often out of date or disabled - we had no way of knowing
- Flexible working conditions prescribed by the government meant we needed to offer more home working 'perks' to our staff - we couldn't facilitate this easily
- Every time we called the consultant in to help fix a problem, he charged us an average of £380 per call-out!
- It was evident that I couldn't manage all this on my own, I was busy running the company. We needed help!!

As we spent a fortune on setting the new system up 4 years ago and upgraded the server licenses when we needed them at a huge cost, I could not justify to the other company directors that we needed to upgrade the system. I was told that the general life of server software and hardware was around 4 years, and that we should look into purchasing new equipment and software to cater for the company growth and expansion. In addition to this we were unable to upgrade to the new version of Small Business Server as it was a completely new software package and would not work on our current server - we needed to purchase new equipment and software.

It looked like we were going to have to buy new equipment and software all over again! Or so we thought.

Our requirements

- In the current economic climate, we needed to manage our costs by paying per month for a brand new system - we did not have liquid cash available.
- We needed to ensure that in 4 years time, we weren't in the same position again
- In our business we need to be flexible about staffing levels. Purchasing all the software in advance seemed quite a waste of money; we needed to flex our licensing accordingly
- We wanted peace of mind that if documents went missing or the server died, we could retrieve data in a timely manner
- We wanted somebody to take care of all our IT systems, and not bill us every time they worked on the system - UNLIMITED support at a fixed price was what we wanted
- Ensure that all PC's and servers were adequately protected from viruses and SPAM - which cause many headaches in the past

The solution:

Thankfully we found Truoffice.

We subscribed to TRU Office's Trufusion which gave us the ability to pay a monthly subscription with no long term contracts:

A very affordable £105.00 per month bought us

- Complete server hardware and software solution for up to 20 users. Additional servers can be bolted on at the same price should the user count increase beyond 20 (minimum 1 required).
- Unlimited maintenance for the server. All hardware is replaced/upgraded as required free of charge!
- Microsoft Software (MS Windows 2008, Exchange Server 2007). The software is always upgraded Microsoft's latest offering free of charge - no upgrade costs involved
- We could now share our ACT! CRM system using this server hardware - they even supported it at no extra cost!
- Our email was cleaned of SPAM and viruses before it arrived into the network. This has saved us money on our broadband bills as we were charged for excessive broadband usage. We now receive monthly reports to see what was going on
- The first 10Gb offsite backup for company data absolutely free!

It additionally made sense for us to add on a connectivity license of £55.00 per month per workstation which gives us

- Unlimited support for each connected workstation ensuring they stay in the best possible shape
- Complete computer monitoring - spotting problems before they arose so we could ensure the highest availability for our staff
- Asset and software tracking for our auditors
- Managed Sophos Endpoint firewall and virus protection for the PC's, with customizable company Policies to block unwanted non-business programs with monthly reporting etc
- All the client access licenses to connect to the server were included - so we were completely compliant

From the list of optional 'bolt-on' features, we chose to add the following for our staff who needed to work from home on the odd occasion. (We could cancel this at any time:

- Remote email tools to access live email via the web/Mobile phone/PDA - 'synced' up so there are no duplicates or missing emails
- VPN Access to our network to work on documents on the server, without having to first copy them to a memory stick the day before and then upload them the next day
- Connect to our PC's from home as if in the office
- Some of our PC's in the office used MS Office 2007 for 3 months of the year. So instead of purchasing the product we simply subscribed to the license at a fraction of the cost and it was on the PC in minutes - all upgrades were completely free!

TRU Office undertook to integrate to whole solution and installed and replace our ailing server with a brand new one for a one-off charge of £250.00. This Trufusion product has proved to be instantly affordable, great value for what we get and completely stress-free.

