



Claranet puts MAM Software in the driving seat

About MAM Software

MAM Software Ltd is one of the UK's leading suppliers of computer systems and data software to the automotive aftermarket in Britain and Ireland. Founded in 1984, MAM Software supplies business management software, hardware, professional services and networks.

MAM Software's customers range from small, single-user garages to the UK's biggest automotive distributors, including Unipart Automotive. The company also provides a range of business management software applications for wholesale and retail businesses in the 'merchant' industries.

One of MAM Software's core offerings is Autopart, a versatile business management application designed to address the needs of motor factors, distributors, car and commercial parts suppliers, paint and refinish stores and retailers. Employing the latest Microsoft technology, it provides a robust business environment that seamlessly integrates sales, stock, accounting and reporting processes. Another important service is Autowork Online, a web-based application for independent garages and tyre retailers, designed to manage the business activities associated with a modern workshop environment. MAM Software employs around 130 staff, with a customer base of over 3,000 customers.

The challenge

Many of MAM Software's larger customers are multi-site operations, and an important part of its business model involves providing Wide Area Network (WAN) connectivity to link its customers' various premises with the company's software applications residing in a third-party data centre.

MAM Software had a long relationship with their previous network partner, but now required an upgrade to a more robust, more resilient and higher performance network, as the company's Director of Sales, Nigel Clemett, explains:

"Our criteria for a new technology partner comprised three main areas: a pedigree in high-performance, high availability WAN provision; a commitment to accountability and transparency; and finally, the ability to add value to other areas of our business beyond the network. We found that in Claranet."



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The solution

Claranet approached the project by initially implementing a high performance pan-European MPLS network. The new network enables users to connect multiple sites within a company-wide Virtual Private Network (VPN), based on Claranet's high-capacity, enterprise-grade backbone. This is sold on to customers under the MAM Network Solutions (MNS) brand name, which provides a range of flexible options including a choice of Service Level Agreements (SLAs), remote / home connectivity, line monitoring, internet breakout and dual line or 3G failover.

The highly-resilient network, coupled with choice of back-up connectivity, ensures that MAM Software experiences far fewer support calls than previously, while Claranet provides a second line of support. The flexibility of the service enables MAM Software to tailor its network service to its range of customers – so that it can provide ultra-high availability and multiple services for those that need it, and more basic services for smaller operators.

With the network in place, MAM Software was then able to take advantage of Claranet's range of managed hosting services.

“It had long been our goal to provide WAN and Autopart as a hosted solution, but finding a provider with expertise in hosting and connectivity was a challenge. There are very few partners with a suitable pedigree in both hosting and networks, but Claranet has that expertise. As a result of the initial networking partnership, we were then able to migrate our Autowork and Autopart software to Claranet's managed virtual hosting service.”

Claranet provides virtual server infrastructure and manages the environment in which MAM Software's applications reside. Claranet's infrastructure uses best-of-breed technologies to ensure high availability and resilience, supported by their multi-award-winning Virtual Data Centre service – an Infrastructure-as-a-Service offering that enables users to provision their own virtual network, hosting and compute resources in real-time, through an easy-to-use portal.

The benefits

“Before finding Claranet, it felt like we were providing two distinct services – our software and WAN provision,” said Clemett. “With Claranet now managing our connectivity and increasingly, the hosting of our software applications, we can offer a fully-packaged, end-to-end service, with a single provider responsible for all aspects of availability and performance.

“Claranet took the time to look at what our business needed, not just the requirements that we set out in our tender,” continued Clemett. “Their size means that they are able to provide a quality, high performance service, yet still be flexible and responsive. Their customer service especially is fantastic, with out-of-hours support and a dedicated account manager that we can get on the phone when we need him.

“The partnership with Claranet has enabled us to re-design the service that we provide to our customers. We now sell an end-to-end service, from the data centre to users' premises. These require much higher SLAs, and we could not offer this without basing it on the firmest of foundations. Consolidating the various aspects of our service with a single, high-quality provider has enabled us to protect our reputation and target more and bigger partners – including a customer who is running our software from Spain, something that we could never have been able to consider in the past. The reputation, size and performance of Claranet will underpin the continued success of MAM Software for years to come,” he concluded.

For more information about MAM Software, please go to: www.mamsoftware.com