



Moving IT for Robinsons Relocation

Robinsons Relocation

Robinsons Relocation Ltd. is one of the leading UK removals companies, with over 100 years' experience in domestic and corporate relocation on a UK, European, and international scale. In that time, the company has grown from a small family-run firm into a national network of seven offices, with 120 staff and an annual turnover of £17 million.

Robinsons Relocation provides a highly professional, cost-effective and reliable service, tailored to meet the needs of both individual and corporate clients. The company completes 15,000 moves each year, with around two-thirds of these being international jobs, involving the transit of large containers full of belongings by sea or air freight.

Robinsons Relocation has long been considered a technological leader in the removals sector, having been one of the first removal companies to use a computer to manage its processes in the 1960's, and as one of the first companies to build the internet and intranets into its business.

The challenge

Robinsons Relocation had no effective business continuity or disaster recovery systems in place to safeguard the productivity and profitability of its operations against the threat of downtime in its IT and communications infrastructure. The success of the company's business is heavily reliant on the ability to manage removals projects efficiently, which in turn relies on effective, responsive and well-organised communication, both between the company and its customers and between individual members of the removals chain within the company. Should a server crash with no business continuity or disaster recovery systems in place, Robinsons Relocation could be faced with the prospect of losing substantial volumes of vital customer data and being unable to fulfil its commitments to customers.

IT Director Richard Veys was given the task of finding a "zero-cost" business continuity and disaster recovery solution, he explains: "We were looking for a solution that would provide us with the security and reassurance that customer data would be backed up and remain available should anything untoward happen, without adding to the overall cost of maintaining the company's IT infrastructure."

The solution

Having spoken to a number of providers, Robinsons Relocation worked together with Claranet to develop a solution that would offset the company's substantial telephony costs to pay for its email services and V-platform, providing a much more secure and functional infrastructure with much lower risk.

Veys continues: "The brief we went to Claranet with was clear and simple: we wanted to migrate our data, email and telephony from our incumbent providers – including BT – into the cloud, and to make them 'disaster-proof'. Claranet now provides us with a hosted MPLS network, a communications suite of email and telephony that is available through our desktops, and a fully backed-up and secure server in the cloud.

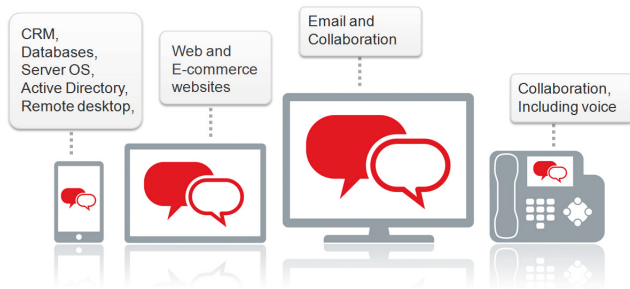


Moving IT to the cloud delivers peace of mind and improved customer service for Robinsons

“There are three key areas we look at when embarking on IT projects: technology, people and finance. In terms of people, this was always going to be fairly straightforward – while the whole desktop backend was ripped-out and replaced, very little was actually changing in terms of staff interaction with the IT and telephony systems. All it amounted to was explaining that people would be getting new handsets and providing some basic training on how to use them,” Veys says.

“Technologically, however, the project was a lot more complex. Robinsons Relocation may have been a market leader in integrating the internet and intranets into its operations, but this meant that there was a lot of antiquated kit to be replaced. In the end, we installed new addresses, new hardware and an entirely new infrastructure design, all purpose-built for the Claranet solution,” he continues.

“Finally, there was the cost element – Claranet managed to devise a solution that offset a lot of the hosting and backup costs against savings made on our telephony, so that we were able to achieve our goal of a ‘zero-cost’ solution.”



The results

The transition to a hosted IT infrastructure with Claranet has had wide-ranging benefits for Robinsons Relocation beyond simply provision for business continuity and disaster recovery. “First and foremost, the Claranet solution has given us a much more secure and functional platform to work with, and I no longer have sleepless nights about the potential loss of data. But it has also really smoothed out the running of the IT department, bringing greater regularity to our costs and boosting the speed and reliability of the network – meaning that I don’t get people complaining about performance anymore,” Veys explains.

“We weren’t actually looking for a customer-focused solution, but a happy side-effect of our migration to Claranet’s solution has been that we are now able to provide our customers with a better service,” he continues. “The full integration of our telephony system onto our desktops – call routing, diverting, voicemail, everything you would expect from an enterprise phone system – means that our staff are able to manage calls in a much more efficient and controlled manner. Claranet has provided us with modern control over a modern communications network.”

The move to the Claranet solution may have delivered better systems, better functionality, and better customer communications for Robinsons Relocation, but this is only part of the reason the company is so happy with its decision, Veys says: “A great deal of our satisfaction with the outcome of this project comes down to the people involved. We found everyone we dealt with at Claranet throughout the process to be incredibly solutions-driven, thoughtful, and happy to help. Alongside the technical solution they put forward, this was probably the main reason for choosing to work with Claranet.

“Trust is difficult to gain, and easy to lose. We need to be able to have total faith in our suppliers. Claranet’s willingness to take responsibility and explain their thought processes was key to us feeling like we were being correctly managed and understood. We are realistic enough to appreciate that, at some stage, something may go wrong – but if it does, Claranet gives us every confidence that we will be centrally involved in the solution process.”

Richard Veys - IT Director - Robinsons Relocation

For more information about Robinsons Relocation, please go to: www.robinson relocation.com