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Case study: Television Systems Ltd

Broadcasting services company found that a hands-off approach to IT support pays off



With services firm Ramsac taking care of its IT, TSL can focus on developing broadcasting systems

Broadcasting services company Television Systems Ltd (TSL) is a company with a strong affinity for technology, helping its clients build state-of-the-art broadcasting facilities. But its relationship with IT is more hands-off – it outsources the entire function.

The company has grown rapidly over the past five years, which has seen it evolve from a small concern of a little more than a dozen staff, to a payroll of 55 full-time employees and as many as 50 contractors. And while initially IT support could be provided by a few staff with an interest in technology, as the business grew that arrangement became unsustainable.

“We would have needed a hugely qualified IT manager and at least three people in their team. We looked at the potential cost of recruitment and found it was less expensive to outsource,” says David Phillips, chief executive of TSL.

One of the main tasks for IT was to maintain and support high-bandwidth IP-based connectivity between offices in Maidenhead and Marlow, its network systems and the IT equipment used in the field.

“Our business is supplying broadcast systems that we design and build to customers anywhere in the world. Managing networks is not something in which we should be specialists,” says Phillips.

TSL uses IT services company Ramsac to oversee all IT support. Ramsac advised on the design and topology of the network, which will soon have to support an overseas office in Dubai.

“Their collective knowledge is more up to date than any individual IT manager’s,” says Phillips.

Under its service level agreement with Ramsac, TSL is guaranteed that someone will be available to take calls. “A full-time IT manager might be on holiday or in bed, and even if he is available he might not be able to fix the problem and would have to spend half a day Googling to find the information. Ramsac has seen it all before and will always be on hand to help via a dedicated telephone helpline,” says Phillips.

The international nature and geographical spread of TSL’s business means that access to the network is vital and security is another key requirement.

“Employees have BlackBerrys and need to be able to reliably connect to our virtual private network from anywhere in the world, so we need an extremely resilient system,” says Phillips.

Rather than dedicate staff to manage this – and the expense that would entail – it is easier to build it onto the contractual agreement with Ramsac, adds Phillips.

Even when TSL wins work that demands additional support or capacity, it is still more economical to pay Ramsac extra than it would be to hire additional IT staff, says Phillips.

“There is a big technology requirement to run our business, but not at the level that justifies a large, qualified IT team,” he says.