

KEEPING IT WORKING – TRANSPUTEC’S FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AT BELRON INTERNATIONAL



THE CLIENT

Belron International Ltd is the world's largest vehicle glass repair and replacement (VGRR) company and the only dedicated provider of VGRR services operating on a global basis. With its roots in South African glass merchants more than a century ago, Belron® now commands a six per cent share of the world's market in 27 countries. The company has over 1,000 service centres and 3,000 mobile repair vehicles serving four million motorists worldwide. Belron® owns a string of companies across the world including Autoglass®, the household name for vehicle glass repair in the UK.

The Group's Head Office is located in Richmond in The King's Observatory, a beautiful Grade I listed building surrounded by parkland. As an historic building the site has sometimes presented a number of practical IT challenges in terms of cabling and computer installation. For ten years these and other IT projects have been managed in partnership with Belron®'s technology provider, Transputec Computers plc. Three years ago this relationship evolved into a comprehensive onsite facilities management (FM) service.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

This fully managed package of support and maintenance serves the IT needs of the 70 members of staff based at Richmond. Initially comprising two day's onsite support a week, the contract was upgraded to full time cover to meet the increasingly complex needs of a diverse group of staff. On any one day there can be between 20 and 70 people in the office with the remaining working remotely, usually abroad.

These are very senior staff, at executive and director level, who travel frequently and tend to work long and unsocial hours.

OVERVIEW

The need

Belron® required a comprehensive facilities management (FM) service to provide IT support and maintenance at its Group Head Office. This included remote support for a diverse group of mobile workers.

The solution

Transputec provides a facilities management service with permanent onsite staffing, helpdesk, escalation, flexible cover and discount procurement channels.

The benefit

- Costs of FM service cheaper than in-house equivalent.
- FM procurement channels reduce admin overheads.
- Consistent high quality service.
- Out of hours support.
- Flexible pricing structure.
- Access to wider range of skills and expertise

Belron executives are equipped with Blackberry devices and laptops in order to access timely and critical information wherever they are working. It is often impractical to return laptops regularly to base for routine maintenance so performance on the road can be problematic. If something goes wrong, users need immediate help.

"It's not easy providing this kind of remote support," said Phil Seat, Belron's IT Architect. "Trouble-shooting over the phone is highly skilled - it requires a rapid understanding of the problem and a calm, professional response." While remote diagnostic tools can sometimes be useful they are no help if the user can't even log on. The job requires sophisticated helpdesk skills and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively."

THE SOLUTION

Prior to upgrading the service from two days a week to full time cover, Belron® put the contract out to tender. "As it was sensible to review the market we conducted a proper benchmarking appraisal," said Phil. "After approaching a number of providers we were pleased to upgrade Transputec's contract. They outperformed other bidders in terms of experience and sheer range of skills but they also offered a proven track record in remote user support, a very important part of the spec." As Transputec now provides a fully managed service, Belron® no longer retains its own in-house support team.

Peter Finnegan, Senior Technical Consultant, is Transputec's main onsite representative. Permanently based at Richmond, he provides day to day IT cover and works alongside the Belron staff. Peter is responsible for all support and maintenance, from simple printer malfunctions to more serious trouble shooting such as server failure. A supply of spare parts is maintained onsite so that repairs can be carried out quickly and easily with minimum disruption to the business.

Support requests are logged via the Transputec helpdesk and relayed back onsite although inevitably staff will approach Peter directly.

"Peter and his colleagues are very approachable and responsive in fielding a diverse and sometimes unusual range of requests from the staff.

Customer feedback #1

"Transputec's facilities management service provides a comprehensive, high quality package of specialised support at a cost we couldn't beat in-house."

Phil Sleat, IT Architect, Belron International Ltd

They have a good deal of autonomy so they just get on with the job - the ability to escalate an issue back to the guys at Transputec means I don't need to get involved." This leaves Phil free to concentrate on his primary responsibilities - managing large-scale projects and strategic IT initiatives for the Group.

When necessary additional resources are deployed by Transputec to meet increased workload demands and to provide holiday cover.

There are also visits to users working at home and some out of hours support: "Transputec's flexible costing structure means we can arrange weekend support when we need it, even at very short notice.

THE BENEFITS

According to Phil, the most important benefit of the FM package is cost: "We conduct cost reviews quite regularly and by any calculation the Transputec service is cheaper than anything we could maintain in-house. When we take into account staff overheads such as salaries, training, holidays, sick leave and other absence cover we just couldn't match the Transputec service." Additional savings result from purchasing equipment and supplies through Transputec." Through their management of all supplies, spares and warranty we gain the advantage of a discounted procurement channel. That also keeps our admin costs low."

The ability to draw on such a wide range of skills and know how is also an important advantage of FM. "Maintaining a high level of intellectual capital in-house is very costly whereas now we can tap into specialised and diverse pool of expertise as and when we need it," said Phil.

Facilities management can also avoid some of the efficiency pitfalls associated with complex IT departmental structures. "I don't think we've ever suffered from the gatekeeper syndrome at Belron but we all know it's very common. FM provides a mechanism to avoid the kind of political baggage that can get in the way of delivering IT effectively. It's in Transputec's interests to be as efficient and effective as possible which means we benefit from a consistently high level of service quality." Phil concluded: "Transputec's facilities management service provides a comprehensive, high quality package of specialised support at a cost we couldn't beat in-house."

Customer feedback #2

“Transputec outperformed other bidders in terms of experience and sheer range of skills but they also offered a proven track record in remote user support.”

Phil Sleat, IT Architect, Belron International Ltd

TRANSPUTEC

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