

TRANSPUTEC ENSURES COST-EFFECTIVE BUSINESS CONTINUITY FOR HIGGINS



THE CLIENT

Essex-based Higgins Group consists of Higgins Homes and Higgins Construction. Higgins Homes PLC is a residential house builder specializing in the construction of high-quality new build units and conversions, ranging from starter apartments through to bespoke detached houses. Higgins Construction PLC is one of the leading names in community regeneration and affordable housing for London and the south east.

In 2012, the Group had a turnover of £202.9 million, reporting a satisfactory profit before taxation of £2.4 million.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Higgins Group approached Transputec for help and advice about corporate disaster recovery and business continuity planning.

“Companies are more reliant on their IT than they realise,” said Martyn Waller, Director of IT at the Higgins Group. “Protecting yourself is crucial - it is not an option.

“Events such as the Buncefield fuel depot disaster, which obliterated the data centre of one software provider and left a Cambridge hospital without a patient information system, made everyone in the company realise that a cast-iron disaster recovery plan was essential.”

The company wanted a clearly-defined recovery strategy to cope with any situation that resulted in loss of data or IT capacity. According to The Definitive Handbook of Business Continuity Management (Hiles and Barnes), between 60 and 90 percent of companies that don't have a proactive disaster plan find themselves out of business within 24 months of experiencing a major incident.

Transputec sent a consultant to the Group's Loughton, Essex headquarters to report on the current position.

OVERVIEW

The need

Higgins Group approached Transputec for help and advice about corporate disaster recovery and business continuity planning. The company wanted a clearly-defined recovery strategy to cope with any situation that resulted in loss of data or IT capacity.

The solution

Transputec audited the existing system, made recommendations and then worked with Higgins to implement an appropriate disaster recovery solution using virtualisation.

Transputec proposed a highly cost-effective disaster recovery plan using virtualisation platform VMware and Double-Take.

THE SOLUTION

Transputec proposed a highly cost-effective disaster recovery plan using virtualisation platform VMware and Double-Take. Within the month, Higgins' new business continuity strategy was operational.

"What this means for Higgins is that one server at their disaster recovery (DR) site can be set up to run lots of operating systems," said Mark. "If, for instance there were usually 30 servers running, VMware allows for this to be replicated across five or six remote servers, sharing CPU, memory, hard drives and other resources. "In a disaster recovery situation Higgins would have access to everything that they needed - at a fraction of the cost involved in doubling-up on everything.

"The other, less cost-effective option to using virtualization, would be doubling up on expensive servers."

Running on a single Windows server in a virtualised environment, Double-Take allows administrators to centrally manage and monitor multiple virtual machine protection jobs from any Windows desktop using the client management console.

Double-Take captures changes regularly, keeping the target virtual disks up to date and ready for recovery and backup at any time. During an outage, the replicated virtual machine can be started on the target server with the latest replicated data available.

THE BENEFITS

"We specified real-time data replication software," said Mark. "If you change a file, it changes at the disaster recovery site at the same time. The result is that if your system is rendered inactive for some reason, you can be up-and-running, using servers at your DR site, within an instant."

Traditional disaster recovery is expensive as it involves exactly duplicating resources over more than one site.

Before the advent of virtualisation solutions, disaster recovery relied upon identical hardware configurations at the DR site, necessitating not just expensive new servers but also the increased costs of maintaining another large site. Virtualisation, as achieved by

The benefits

- Cost-effective DR solution achieved and virtualisation keeps down infrastructure costs
- A major incident would no longer cause downtime for Higgins
- Provides more reliable data backup than tape.
- Integration of new hardware and software caused no interruption to business
- Basic training given to administrators as part of project
- No user training required
- Solution requires negligible day-to-day maintenance
- Disaster recovery plan in place within one month of Transputec producing initial report

Transputec using VMware, saves time and money and maximises the efficacy of computer resources.

“Transputec supported and worked with Higgins to implement the solution and the day-to-day operation now pretty much looks after itself,” said Martyn.

“They also provided the initial training that has allowed Double-Take to seamlessly protect our business.”

Talking about training, Mark said: “We showed Higgins’ IT administrators how to monitor replication, how to connect to virtual machines and how to fix basic issues and they’ve had no problems adapting to the new set-up. “Higgins no longer runs the risk of downtime in the event of a major incident,” he added. “An exact copy - 100 percent up-to-date - of the company’s entire IT system is now instantly accessible from the DR site.”

Customer feedback

“Transputec worked with us to implement the solution and the day-to-day operation now pretty much looks after itself.”

Martyn Waller, Director of IT at Higgins Group

THE PEDIGREE

Since our inception in the mid-1980s, Transputec has had the trust of Britain's foremost IT users, including the Ministry of Justice, Samsung, Danone, Camelot, Chubb Insurance and DP-DHL/ Williams Lea to name but a few. Vertical sector experience covering banking & finance, media, third sector, technology, retail, SMEs and health care adds further value to IT users in the form of industry-specific knowledge.

The human component

The pace of change in ICT is so fast that what was cutting edge technology just a few years ago we now need to refer to as *traditional IT* in order to differentiate it from what we're doing today and tomorrow.

Among the **Managed Services** offered by Transputec are Remote Infrastructure Management, Always On Helpdesk Support, and IT Outsourcing.

Please visit <http://www.transputec.com/it-support-service/> for more information.

A business like Transputec is as much about its people - their experience, customer-focus and expertise - as anything else. From initial assessment to delivery of turnkey solutions and day-to-day customer care, these professionals take solutions from Transputec's hardware, software and professional services business units and ensure they're a perfect fit.

Throughout our supply chain we have exceptional relationships with the world's premier hardware and software brands, giving us a competitive edge to make everything from economies of scale to mission-critical architecture judgment calls.

ENVIRONMENT AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

While Transputec might well be said to have its head in The Cloud, our corporate feet are firmly on the ground. Our Green Data Centre in Iceland boasts impeccable eco-credentials that embrace natural free cooling up to 24kWh and zero carbon footprint.

One of the biggest power consumers in any business is the hosting of their IT equipment. It runs 24/7/365 consuming vast amounts of power – every business needs to look for ways to deliver Green IT.

For a comprehensive guide see <http://www.transputec.com/green-it/>

TRANSPUTEC

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