The Erith Group saves business data – and £38,000 per year – with Google Apps

Google

Erith

Business

The Erith Group has over four decades of leadership in the construction industry, specialising in demolition, asbestos removal, remediation, waste recycling and haulage. With a network of offices across the country and an impressive client list, this privately owned family business is experiencing rapid growth as a result of its commitment to delivering exceptional quality of service and client satisfaction.

The company boasts an annual turnover in excess of 40 million, employs a workforce of over 200 skilled professionals and, in 2007, was named by The Sunday Times as one of the best small businesses to work for in the UK.

Challenge

Like so many medium sized businesses, IT manager Paul Driscoll has sole responsibility for every piece of the Erith Group's technology jigsaw – from the desktop, through data storage and security, to managing an increasingly complex communications environment.

As a rapidly expanding company, where employees often work remotely, the Erith Group needed a secure, reliable and flexible IT infrastructure able to scale to meet its needs. "Systems management was becoming a complex, time-consuming and expensive problem. We are in the business of demolition, not information technology, so keeping things simple is a major priority," commented Driscoll.

But nothing could prepare Driscoll for what happened one night in September 2006 when a catastrophic fire razed the company's headquarters to the ground – taking all internal communications and IT systems with it.

> "Seeing the incredible benefit of the hosted Google Apps suite, it wasn't long before I had boardroom approval to turn the trial into a commercial roll-out."

Solution

Even before events of that night, Driscoll had been investigating solutions that would eliminate complexity from his IT. An enthusiastic personal user of Google Mail since 2004, he saw an opportunity two years on to extend Google into the business, streamlining his systems and freeing up time to do more than simply "keep the IT lights on".

But before he could complete his deployment strategy, the impact of the fire took centre stage.

However comprehensive your disaster recovery strategy, the sight of a charred and smouldering server room is the stuff of nightmares for an IT professional. "Despite the back-up working correctly, such a catastrophic incident cannot fail to have a major impact on the business. My job was to minimise this impact and get the systems running again," recalls Paul.

"Fortunately, we had been in a process of trialling Google Apps prior to the fire. Almost half of our senior executives had migrated to the hosted software so were able to access email, calendar and document applications as normal from laptops and home PCs with an internet connection. This meant we could conduct 'business

> "We are in the business of demolition, not information technology, so keeping things simple is a major priority."

Paul Driscoll
IT Manager

ABOUT GOOGLE APPS

Google Apps offers simple, powerful communication and collaboration tools for enterprises of any size in business, education, or government – all hosted by Google to streamline setup, minimise maintenance, and reduce IT costs. With Google Mail, Google Calendar, and integrated IM, users can stay connected and work together with ease, even in private domains. And, using Google Docs, which include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation tools, they can share files and collaborate in real-time, keeping versions organised and available wherever and whenever users work.

For more information, visit
www.google.com/a

as usual' while I recovered the wider systems. Seeing this incredible benefit of the hosted Google Apps suite, it wasn't long before I had boardroom approval to turn the trial into a commercial roll-out right across the organisation."

Benefits

Since implementation, the Erith Group has seen a significant reduction in the cost of its IT. The email storage capacity for the company has increased dramatically without additional cost, allowing the business to plan growth for the future.

Economics aside, Google has enabled the Erith Group to deliver very significant improvements in working practices. Employees can now access their work from any location with Internet access, and work together on presentation and document creation thanks to the collaborative features of the software. Google Docs allows employees to simultaneously create, access and edit documents, spreadsheets and presentations without multiple versions having to be saved. This allows teams to work on projects together, irrespective of their geographic location, while avoiding the time consuming process of emailing documents back and forth and keeping track of the different versions.

The Erith Group executives now have an incredibly flexible communications environment, allowing new business prospects, clients and employees across disparate offices to virtually meet and participate remotely in presentations, while its engineers can record large demolition projects by uploading photography to Google's centralised Picasa Web Album.

"To achieve the same level of functionality I currently have with Google Apps, the business would have had to allocate an additional budget of £38,000 per year – and we still would not have seen the productivity