



Schneider Industry: A Hosted Managed Solution - A Proactive IT Strategy

The Company

Established in 1987, Schneider Industry (UK) Limited specialises in the distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage vessels both above and below ground. Through the utilisation of modern plant and production techniques, Schneider is now established as the largest distributor of LPG vessels in the UK.

As businesses throughout Britain began to feel the impact of the recession, Schneider Industry (UK) Limited took action to ensure its business would remain sustainable and successful during what promised to be a difficult downturn. In order to beat the recession, Schneider decided to consolidate its business sites and relocate the operations of its Airdrie base to Schneider's site in Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire.

The Challenge

Schneider required a system that would provide cost-savings and increase efficiencies across the company. As the Airdrie site had housed all of the company's servers, Schneider decided to opt for a hosted managed service offering and turned to CPIo for reliable advice on the best solution for their business. CPIo's inside knowledge of Schneider's business processes was a huge advantage in providing this advice, along with Schneider's confidence in them to deliver an efficient and reliable distributed system.

Due to some necessary consolidation of resources Schneider had physically fewer staff available to manage the IT system. "As a relatively small company we don't have the internal resource or skill-base to effectively manage our IT system in-house, and even less so now that we have fewer staff members. Prior to the closure of Airdrie, we had a few members of staff managing our IT as an add-on to their regular job, but this often caused resource issues as staff were repeatedly taken away from the job they were meant to be doing to assist with IT problems." Helen Didcock, Business Support Manager, Schneider Industry (UK) Limited.

The Solution

CPIo was already managing the remote access of the other sites connecting to the Airdrie-based servers, and Schneider had confidence in its ability to deliver an end-to-end business solution that could withstand the organisation's demands. Continuing the long-standing relationship, Schneider found that the hosted managed service offered by CPIo fitted the needs of its business perfectly and embarked upon a three year contract for its entire IT infrastructure to be hosted and delivered back by the Sage Business Partner.

Ardent 24 offered Schneider a release from the 'maintenance' of IT and helped create a proactive IT strategy that ensures the company are working with the latest software applications and operating systems and experiencing optimal performance levels. Ardent 24 offers full server technology using failover and load balanced technologies. Online back ups are produced as standard as well as a nightly off site tape back up.

Helen comments, "With CPIo hosting our entire IT infrastructure, we no longer have to worry about where to house and how to manage our servers, and the fixed monthly service fee provides us with predictability in our budgeting, as we now have a flat line spend on our IT for the next three years."

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The Benefits

Following the successful partnership that Schneider has enjoyed with CPiO the decision to move to a hosted managed solution made perfect sense and has provided Schneider with a wealth of benefits. Helen continues, "Since moving to the hosted managed solution we have seen a number of key benefits which have really helped to improve our business processes. The system is very easy to use – staff only need to log onto the internet and then all our applications are delivered back to each user. It is great that we no longer have to worry about hardware updates, system back-ups or security issues, as we know CPiO is providing us with the most secure technology available, which provides complete peace of mind."

Helen continues, "With the old system there were often regular updates to the server so we did experience a lot of downtime. However, since switching to the hosted solution we have had 100% uptime which we are delighted about! I previously worked very closely with CPiO, who supported me in the day to day management of the IT system. However, as I am not an IT expert this was always challenging from my perspective, and whilst the support I received from CPiO was excellent, I would often have to spend a considerable amount of time resolving IT issues in-house. But since implementing the hosted solution I no longer have to worry about IT which allows me to focus on my key tasks without distraction."

The switch to the hosted solution involved a complex implementation process for Schneider in transferring large amounts of data from a number of different solutions onto the server located in CPiO's Tier IV – the highest level that can be reached when specifying a data centre's criticality – data centre. A key part of the implementation process involved Schneider deciding on what data it required and ensuring that all documents were centrally stored and not kept on local drives. With the closure date of the Airdrie site set, CPiO worked to a tight deadline to ensure that all the data and hosting services were correctly transferred and that all users could access the system.

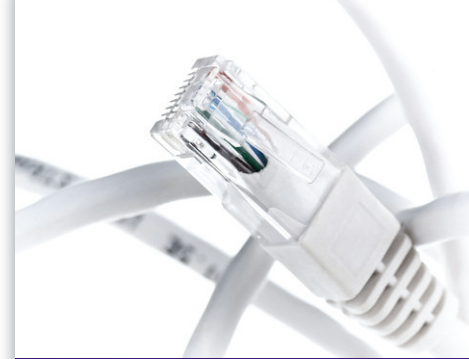
As Helen explains, "We were very pleased with the implementation process. We have experienced no major issues with the system and everything we needed was completed on time and on budget. CPiO provide us with on-going support, however the system has required very little support due to the sophisticated environment CPiO delivers."

The Future

The enterprise wide system is flexible and scalable, giving Schneider a solution that will grow with their business moving forward and ensure technology is managed to greater business effect.

Jonathan Dawkins, Managed Services Consultant at CPiO, concludes, "It is great that Schneider is seeing such significant benefits from the hosted solution. This is a perfect example of how businesses can benefit from the hosted model; it is extremely cost-effective. The system allowed Schneider to downsize with no loss in productivity or efficiency but is also capable of expanding to meet new business requirements. I am very much looking forward to continuing the good work with Schneider to help the business as it grows and expands within the industry."

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