

Managing the company's greatest IT asset at Henderson Global Investors

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An efficient IT network is crucial to the ongoing prosperity of Henderson's widespread business. The state-of-the-art network that connects all 15 worldwide offices is relied upon as the backbone to every business-critical application. This reliance means it is vital that the network performs 24 hours a day to support all these business users, and the significant and growing number of trades carried out by Henderson electronically. Any system downtime could spell immediate losses to both the business's revenue and reputation.

The Challenge

To maintain optimum network operation at this critical level requires dedicated network management. In the past Henderson has outsourced this function to a third party provider as part of a major infrastructure outsource contract. However when a fault emerged that was proving impossible for this provider to fix, a solution had to be found quickly to prevent any further disruption to the business.

Simon Stratford, Global Head of IT, said, "We had been living with a network problem which was progressively getting worse. At the point it seriously threatened our core network stability I decided to call upon Advance7 to see if they could assist. Having worked with them in the past I had seen first hand the quality of their work, and knew they had the ability to get to the root of a problem fast. And they did - what had been affecting us for half a year was

diagnosed by Advance7 in just 48 hours, and rapidly solved thereafter."

He continued, "Advance7 also identified a huge number of additional problems resulting from poor implementation, out of date or missing documentation and an absence of configuration management that had the potential to threaten network performance, and even bring it down completely. As I'd seen in the past they gave a straightforward and confident assessment of what these issues were, and how they should be resolved. We realised this was a company with whom we could entrust the management of what is one of our most valuable IT assets."

The Solution

As Henderson's network managed service provider Advance7 has the day-to-day responsibility for maintaining 24x7 uptime of the group's core business network. The provider's critical task is to ensure that users around the globe have seamless, immediate access to any business application that runs on the network at the very point it's needed, across multiple time zones.

To achieve this Advance7 has a team physically in place at Henderson's Broadgate headquarters, with a Team Leader, Network Engineer and a Project Leader always on-site at any one time. The overall Advance7 team comprises six network specialists who rotate on a regular basis, to ensure Henderson always has full-time cover and back-up available from people with a current and intimate knowledge of their network and related IT infrastructure.

In addition to continual management of the network Henderson also requires Advance7 to undertake ad-hoc project work on a regular basis. This has included network optimisation, system stress and diagnostic testing, plus ongoing network traffic monitoring to identify and solve problems before they impact the business.

Mr Stratford explained, “Alongside the crucial service of managing our network day to day Advance7 also helps us to plan the deployment of new systems and applications. Using their unique approach they closely analyse real network traffic to identify and pinpoint any problems prior to application launch. This minimises the risk of business disruption that can accompany a new deployment and ensures that, when we introduce a new technology solution to the business, it’s guaranteed to work as it should from day one.” He added, “This direction and advice we get from Advance7 on application testing and problem identification is absolutely invaluable to us. It means we can confidently roll out new technology to support the business safe in the knowledge that it will enhance, not adversely affect our operations.”

The Benefit

Over the two years that Advance7 has managed the Henderson network the business has seen a significant improvement in network performance and system uptime from previous levels. All required service and stability level agreements are continually met by the IT department, ensuring that all the users across the network benefit from a highly efficient internal service.

Mr Stratford said, “I cannot emphasise enough how vital it is to our operations to have totally robust network performance. If we lose network connection to our brokers, for example, we simply cannot trade electronically with them. With a large and increasing part of our trade done in this way just one minute of downtime would significantly affect our trading

He added, “The network to the users is like a utility. Just as they expect water to come from

capability. Advance7’s managed service is our insurance policy against this loss of business happening.”

the tap, so they expect the network to function smoothly when they connect to it. Of course you don’t expect thanks each day the network works – but you know if it didn’t, they’d shout loudly about it. And since Advance7 took over the management of our network I can’t remember a single time when that has happened.”

Having specialists on-site and able to work on ad hoc projects has also allowed the network to grow and meet the ever-increasing user and application demands placed upon it. Additionally, by assisting with the development of new system applications, Advance7 has saved Henderson’s both time and money by ensuring new applications are launched free from performance issues.

Mr Stratford said, “Using an outsourcing provider can deliver great benefits to companies - as many will promise you. What’s different about Advance7 is they actually deliver that promise because they have the right skills, the right approach and the right attitude – they really feel like part of my team.”

He concluded, “I’ve been asked by other IT directors how they can address the network problems they are experiencing, and I’ve recommend they approach Advance7. I know I can be confident in that endorsement because, over the ten years I’ve known them, every one of their team has been impressive, and delivered exceptional results. Advance7 are reliable, proactive, capable - and quite simply outstanding at what they do.”

Challenge

To provide 24x7 management of Henderson’s core business network across multiple offices and time zones.

Solution

Appointing an on-site team from Advance7 to closely monitor and manage the network, plus assist with the planning of new system and application deployments.

Business Benefits

Advance7 has optimised the performance and stability of Henderson’s core business network to maximise network uptime and performance.

- Ensured the network delivers an efficient and reliable user experience 24 hours a day
- Provided fast identification and correction of network problems to eliminate any potential impact on the business, such as loss of trade
- Saved time and money by enabling the launch of new applications pre-screened and corrected of any problems prior to roll out.