



IT outsourcing improves Channel 4's agility



Customer agenda

- Cost Reduction
- Continuous Improvement/Innovation

Services

- Dedicated Service Desk
- Server Management
- Resources on Demand
- Product Fulfilment Service
- Configuration & Logistics

Technology

Microsoft software, NetApp storage, UNIX, VMware, HP desktops and laptops, IBM and Sun servers

Customer overview

Channel 4's business has grown considerably since it first hit our television screens in 1982. Channel 4 has not only expanded the number of channels it operates but also developed an award-winning new media and digital portfolio, which includes 4 On Demand.

Business need

The integration of television with new media services means that Channel 4 is operating in a dynamic and fast-moving industry. It is therefore essential that its partners can keep pace with change and deliver new services quickly. Nowhere is this more important than in IT.

As John Freebairn, IS Services Manager for Channel 4, explains: "We need our IT partners to be responsive, flexible and creative. They also need to fit with the channel's culture, which is based on teamwork, being first and inspiring change."

Channel 4's IT infrastructure was supported by a broad group of suppliers, and the company was keen to increase the value being delivered – especially surrounding desktop support. "We initially embarked on a review of just our desktop sourcing strategy but realised that by broadening our scope, we could maximise the efficiencies and potential savings of a new consolidated outsourcing contract," comments John.

Solution

As a result, Channel 4 opted to appoint an IT partner that could take responsibility for its network, server and desktop infrastructure and provide a service desk. "This approach enabled us to rationalise the number of IT suppliers," comments John. "We wanted our new partner to be strategic and flexible. Computacenter demonstrated a track record in desktop support and service desk provision, and had a good cultural fit."

The managed service, which covers two London-based Channel 4 sites and five satellite offices, went live in April 2005 after a three-month transition that included the transfer of 19 staff to Computacenter under TUPE regulations.

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Outsourcing through Computacenter has enabled us to reduce onsite presence, freeing up valuable space within the Channel 4 offices.

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Computacenter responds quickly to our increasing need to provision IT infrastructure for new and emerging business units.

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John Freebairn
IS Services Manager
Channel 4

How Computacenter helped

Managing the transition to the new service was the first challenge to face Channel 4 and Computacenter. As John explains: “When selectively outsourcing areas of IT, a company must assess the impact on staff and existing projects. Communication and careful planning is essential. Computacenter worked closely with our team to minimise disruption during the business take-on phase.”

Channel 4 staff also had to cope with the IT service desk no longer being an on-site function. “Taking the service desk off-site was a big step and meant a shift in our culture,” adds John. The service desk, which is managed from Computacenter’s dedicated Service Support Centre, handles around 1,900 calls a month from Channel 4’s 850 permanent staff and large freelance community. The broadcaster also uses Computacenter’s Services Operation Centre for remote management of its 170 corporate servers. “Remote services enable the on-site team to focus on projects and strategic development, which helps to improve the company’s overall agility,” comments John.

As well as helping with day-to-day management tasks, such as configuration, asset management, application packaging and maintenance, Computacenter also provides additional resources and expertise for specific IT projects. For example, Channel 4 is deploying a VMware solution as part of a server consolidation programme. It has also replaced its 1,400-strong estate of desktops, laptops and rolled out Windows XP and Office 2003 with Computacenter’s help.

Results

The partnership is estimated to deliver cost savings of around 15 per cent. “Cost reduction was a key driver of the outsourcing contract,” comments John. “We also wanted to increase service levels, especially for first contact resolution. Computacenter met the initial service level targets and following a service redesign incorporating increased service level agreements, it has continued to consistently achieve its targets.”

Continuous improvement is a key driver as the five-year partnership between the two companies evolves. “We work as one for the benefit of both parties,” adds John.

Channel 4 is now working closely with Computacenter’s storage experts to upgrade its existing environment with a new storage solution, which will greatly increase capacity and manageability while providing a strategic platform for the next five years.

More resources

For more information on our support services, visit:

www.computacenter.com/services

Read more customer case studies at:

www.computacenter.com/case-study