BUILDING BLOCKS

Crest Nicholson builds a sustainable future with Computacenter managed services

SERVICES
- Client computing
- Global Service Desk
- Enterprise Compute, Data & Storage Management
- Local Area Network
- Smart Supply, Supply Chain Services
- Managed Services

USER EXPERIENCE
- Responsive IT support
- Less IT downtime

BUSINESS IMPACT
- High IT service levels
- Affordable costs
- Access to skills and resources

BUSINESS OUTCOME
- Improves staff productivity
- Safeguards customer services
- Support growth and change

OBJECTIVE

To maintain customer service levels throughout its current growth phase, Crest Nicholson needs to ensure its employees receive exceptional IT service levels. With sales processes managed from development sites, critical IT systems must be maintained across a geographically diverse area, which adds to the complexity of IT management.

SOLUTION

Crest Nicholson has been working with Computacenter to support its IT infrastructure and 750 users since 2008, with a new three-year contract agreed in March 2014. Computacenter provides first line support, datacenter hosting, network management services and numerous other services. An ongoing commitment to continual service improvement has resulted in a number of initiatives that simplify IT management and free up Crest Nicholson's internal IT department.

OUTCOME

The partnership with Computacenter enables Crest Nicholson to provide its users with high IT service levels at an affordable cost. This not only safeguards customer services, but also maximises staff satisfaction and productivity. The service offers the flexibility Crest Nicholson needs to support growth and change, and provides access to skills and resources to enable the company to take advantage of new technologies.

ABOUT CREST NICHOLSON

Crest Nicholson is a UK-based housing developer responsible for building sustainable communities in the south of England. The company builds more than 2,000 homes a year across approximately 45 development sites, and prides itself on innovative designs that take into account the styles and materials of the local area. Since it was founded in 1963, Crest Nicholson has abided by a strong set of principles. For example, it is heavily focused on training young people and sustainability – 10 per cent of its workforce comprises apprentices and 95 per cent of construction waste is diverted from landfill.

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Computacenter brings new ideas and technologies to the business. The partnership provides us with access to a broad range of IT skills and resources so we can focus on building homes.

Myles Gibbins, Group IT Director at Crest Nicholson

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OBJECTIVE

Safeguarding IT availability across development sites

Due to the nature of the market in which it operates, Crest Nicholson experiences periods of rapid growth and consolidation. Currently in a growth phase, the company needs to ensure that its IT infrastructure and services offer the agility to cope with this expansion, and customer services are not impacted by poor IT availability.

Myles Gibbins, Group IT Director at Crest Nicholson, comments: "We pride ourselves on offering excellent customer care through the home-buying process. As sales take place predominantly onsite, we need to ensure we have adequate and well-maintained IT capabilities across our development sites as well as at our head and regional offices."

For example, sales and marketing teams need to be able to respond rapidly to emails and access corporate applications from development sites to assist customers, while engineers often need to download drawings and building specifications.

With geographically diverse sites, supporting the IT infrastructure and users can be costly and complex, particularly with an increasing number of employees using mobile devices.

"We started rolling out mobile devices at executive level, and we're gradually deploying them to our customer service teams too," explains Myles. "These users are the face of Crest Nicholson so we need to provide them with exceptional IT service levels."

SOLUTION

Managed services that balance quality with cost

Crest Nicholson has worked with Computacenter to provide IT managed services since 2008. The home-builder signed a new three-year agreement in March 2014.

"We went out to market for the new contract, but after investigating the service levels competitors were offering, we realised that the user satisfaction we were achieving with Computacenter was far higher than the industry average, and were unwilling to settle for less," says Myles.

Computacenter provides a comprehensive range of IT services including:
- A service desk that provides incident, problem and change management
- IT procurement and asset management
- Datacenter hosting
- Server, storage and backup management
- Network management

Under the new contract, the majority of these services are delivered from Computacenter's Global Service Desk and Operational Command Centre in South Africa.

"We decided to move services to Computacenter's facility in Cape Town due to the flexibility offered, as well as lower costs," explains Myles. "We get the best of both worlds – we can take advantage of optimised processes that maximise efficiency thanks to Computacenter's industrialised approach to service delivery, but we also get the flexibility we need to meet changing business demands."

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> **Myles Gibbins, Group IT Director at Crest Nicholson**
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750 users

Focus on improvement

Continual service improvement is written into the managed service. Every month at service review meetings, the combined Crest Nicholson and Computacenter team identifies potential improvements and creates a plan for putting them into action.

"Computacenter's PASS12T methodology, which is based on a 'shift-left' approach, has resulted in a number of improvements over the years," says Myles. "For example, we've shifted system administration tasks for core applications from the internal second line support team to the Computacenter service desk, which frees up our team for more specialist work."

To support IT and business change, the two companies are currently working on an enterprise architecture initiative. This involves mapping IT services to business processes so the team can understand interdependencies. "The project will enable us to establish a three-year rolling technology roadmap so we know exactly where investments will need to be made as we enter new budgeting cycles," explains Myles.

The project has also enabled Crest Nicholson to identify duplication across its IT products, and remove unnecessary software to reduce licensing and support costs.

Although Computacenter's services are mainly focused on delivering day-to-day IT services for Crest Nicholson, the partnership also enables the home-builder to access specialist skills and resources as and when it needs them.

For example, Computacenter recently designed a new hybrid network for the organisation that will support Microsoft Office 365 and a range of collaboration tools. "The new network will enable our cloud-first strategy and provide staff with access to collaboration solutions such as Lync 2013, SharePoint and Yammer," adds Myles. "This will help support our increasingly mobile workforce."

OUTCOME
Greater efficiency and agility

With consistently high quality yet flexible services from Computacenter, Crest Nicholson can ensure its users have access to the IT systems they need to deliver exceptional customer service.

"The service with Computacenter is very user-focused, as demonstrated by the results of our regular surveys – we consistently achieve user satisfaction levels of more than 90 per cent," says Myles.

By partnering with Computacenter to provide IT managed services, Crest Nicholson has been able to:

Provide exceptional service levels at an affordable cost: The company can safeguard the availability of its critical IT systems 24x7. Thanks to the economies of scale offered by Computacenter, it can ensure that maintenance work is completed out of hours to minimise disruption to users, which it wouldn't be able to do internally.

Enable its users: Less IT downtime and responsive first line support services means that staff can work more efficiently, regardless of their location, thereby improving staff productivity.

Enhance business agility: The managed services contract enables the housing developer to scale services up and down seamlessly, which is particularly important during Crest Nicholson's current growth phase.

"Computacenter brings new ideas and technologies to the business," adds Myles. "The partnership provides us with access to a broad range of IT skills and resources so we can focus on building homes."

90%+
user satisfaction rate

MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about our workplace services and read more customer case studies, visit
www.computacenter.com