

Yorkshire Building Society

supports growth and colleague collaboration with new email platform



Customer challenge

To support its evolution from a predominantly regional financial services organisation to the second largest building society in the UK, Yorkshire Building Society Group (the Group) needed to establish a stable and scalable IT infrastructure. Prompted by a number of mergers, acquisitions and support issues with its existing email solution, the Group decided to upgrade to a platform that was easier to integrate and manage.

Computacenter solution

Yorkshire Building Society Group partnered with Computacenter to help it migrate to Microsoft Exchange. Computacenter assisted with designing, sourcing and configuring the new messaging platform, which is used by more than 4,300 colleagues, and minimised project risks with best practice processes. It is now responsible for managing the environment as part of a wider managed service with the Group.

Results

With a consistent, reliable and scalable email platform across the group, the Group has been able to enhance cost control, collaboration and mobility.

Services

- Flexible Workplace
- Corporate Email & Messaging
- Service Desk

Technology

- HP servers
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft Active Directory

Customer Agenda

- Growth/Business Change
- Continuous Improvement/Innovation
- Access to Skilled Resources
- Cost Reduction

Customer profile:

Providing financial services that people can trust

Yorkshire Building Society Group is the second largest building society in the UK. It has 231 branches, more than 90 agencies and assets of approximately £33 billion. It employs more than 4,300 staff and has 3.5 million customers, offering them savings, mortgages, insurance, financial advice and share dealing services. The Group includes Barnsley Building Society, Chelsea Building Society, Norwich & Peterborough, Accord Mortgages, YBS Share Plans and Yorkshire Key Services.

As a mutual building society, the Group has no external shareholders and is owned by and run for the benefit of its members.

The Group's vision is to be the most trusted provider of financial services in the UK. Its roots date back to 1864, when the organisation was started by a trio of entrepreneurs in Huddersfield. The Group has come along way since then, experiencing significant growth through mergers and acquisitions, particularly over the last four years.

Business challenge:

A communications platform to support a growing business

To ensure its growth is sustainable, Yorkshire Building Society Group needs to be able to maintain high quality standards when it comes to customer services. A scalable and robust IT and communications infrastructure is therefore essential.

Stephen Mulley, Head of IT Service Management at Yorkshire Building Society Group, comments: "We needed to increase our IT maturity and capabilities in line with the expansion of the business. With more colleagues, more members and more geographically diverse locations, supporting our existing estate was becoming increasingly difficult."

During a merger with Chelsea Building Society in 2010, it became evident that the organisation's email environment needed refreshing to simplify both support and the integration of the new business.

Scott Robinson, Desktop Services Manager at Yorkshire Building Society Group, explains: "With plans to outsource elements of our workplace IT, including email support, we needed a common platform that did not need a specialist skill set. We also wanted to enhance collaboration and safeguard access to information."

Computacenter solution:

Migrating to a more unified messaging solution

With its legacy platform about to reach end of support, the Group took the decision to migrate to Microsoft Exchange. With limited inhouse experience of the solution, it lacked the technical resources needed to ensure the success of the implementation.

Having partnered with Computacenter for several years for hardware break-fix services, the Group was already undergoing due diligence prior to committing to a wider managed service with the company.

"We had been impressed with Computacenter's services and they had proven experience in delivering successful Microsoft Exchange migrations," explains Stephen. "With the outsourcing deal on the horizon, it made sense for

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Stephen Mulley,
Head of IT Service Management,
Yorkshire Building Society Group

Computacenter to be involved in implementing the email environment that it would eventually support.”

Computacenter helped Yorkshire Building Society Group design, implement and integrate the new messaging environment, which included hardware provisioning, installation and configuration. It worked closely with the internal team to migrate more than 4,000 mailboxes from the legacy system to the new environment, as well as 1,500 mailboxes from Chelsea Building Society.

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Scott Robinson,
Desktop Services Manager,
Yorkshire Building Society Group

Mitigating project risks

The project also incorporated an Active Directory healthcheck, as Scott explains: “Computacenter recommended the assessment in advance of the migration. This ensured that our Active Directory configuration was capable of supporting the new email solution and minimised potential problems.”

With Computacenter and Yorkshire Building Society Group working to a shared plan and collective responsibilities, all parties understood the interdependencies between the different project components and the implications of not meeting specific deadlines. Scott comments, “The project team held regular review meetings and ensured continuous communication with business and IT stakeholders to safeguard governance.”

Computacenter’s best practices and methodologies for project and change management, developed via its Shared Services Factory, also helped mitigate the risks of migrating to an entirely new messaging platform.

Once the migration was completed, Computacenter worked with IT training specialists QA to provide floorwalkers to assist individual users with any problems. “The new email environment represented a significant change for users, with both a new interface and different functionality,” explains Scott. “To simplify adoption, QA worked alongside our Learning and Development team to provide deskside assistance and develop training materials.”

Supporting the new environment

Although the wider managed services contract was still under negotiation, Computacenter provided immediate support for the Exchange environment.

Three months later, the full five-year contract was agreed and Computacenter’s responsibilities were extended to include:

- A service desk providing second line support
- Infrastructure monitoring from the Computacenter Operational Command Centre in Nottingham
- Network, desktop and server management

As part of the migration to the managed service, Computacenter was also involved in other aspects of the Group’s IT transformation programme, including server and network refresh projects.

Results:

Driving future growth

Yorkshire Building Society Group now has a common platform for email, calendar and meeting room management across the entire group, including Chelsea Building Society. “The new messaging environment is fit-for-purpose, reliable and scalable,” comments Scott. “It has also enabled us to move forward with our managed services strategy, which wouldn’t have been possible with the previous solution.”

Upgrading its communications platform has enabled the Yorkshire Building Society Group to:

Control costs: The organisation has been able to decommission two legacy environments that were costly to support. With a single standardised email solution that integrates easily with the rest of its IT infrastructure, the Group can reduce the costs and complexities of managing its IT environment.

Safeguard colleague productivity and communications: It is now easier for colleagues across the business to communicate internally as well as with partners and customers. This was particularly important during the final stages of the Yorkshire Building Society/Chelsea Building Society merger, when various integration projects were underway.

Enable greater mobility: The new environment will simplify email management for Android and iPhone devices, which are widely used by the senior executives and field sales representatives. This simplifies access to information while on the move, which optimises staff time and efficiency.

“The success of the email upgrade project has cemented Computacenter as a strategic IT partner for the Group,” comments Stephen. “This project, along with our wider IT transformation initiatives, will put us in a better position for continued future growth, and to support the organisation as we work toward our objective of being the most trusted financial services organisation in the UK.”