



Case Study – Automatic Flare Systems Ltd

AFS are an SME specialising in mechanical and electrical systems for landfill sites. We were recommended to them after they had experienced a poor level of support from their existing IT supplier. I personally met with one of the company directors, Bev Willacy, to discuss their current situation and why I knew we would provide a better quality of service. AFS has paid for a support contract with a rival IT supplier but had found an unwillingness to take ownership of any issues and an inability to provide a reasonable response time. We audited their systems and provided a number of recommendations and solutions.

Audit Findings

The infrastructure was based around a Windows 2003 Small Business Server deployment with Windows XP clients. We were satisfied that the previous IT company had done a satisfactory job of installation & configuration. However the specific configuration requirements requested by AFS had important usability considerations which were never explained to the end user. The result of this lack of after-care was the slow degradation of performance of the clients over a period of time to the point that a simple client log in was taking over 10 minutes.

AFS were making full use of the centralised file & e-mail store provided by SBS 2003, however no backup had been configured, nor any backup device provided leaving AFS vulnerable to server failure.

Recommendations

We were able to offer AFS contract free support. Benefiting from no lock-ins and them only paying for what was used. This considerably reduced their support costs without compromising on quality or response times.

We diagnosed the slow logins and offered a suitable solution, also explaining the root cause and reinforcing the steps needed to prevent the issue reoccurring.

We also recommended and then implemented a DAT-72 tape based backup solution.

Unique Challenges

As the infrastructure had already been competently installed, there weren't any real IT challenges here. The primary challenge here was one of trust. AFS had been badly let down by their existing IT supplier. We had to not only convince AFS we could provide a level of service to the standard of quality they expected but we were also determined to actually deliver a quality of service both proactive & reactive that exceeded their expectations.

Management & Maintenance

As with all our SBS clients we installed remote management allowing us to perform day to day management tasks and respond rapidly to server configuration requests and support issues.

We also perform quarterly maintenance functions utilising both remote access and a quarterly on site visit.

“4IT Systems have been like a silent part of our team for the last few years offering pro-active support and constant monitoring of all our IT systems. With their in-depth knowledge and first class customer service they have allowed us the freedom to concentrate on our core business. They always find a solution to our needs and we have complete faith that our computer network is in safe hands.” – Bev Willacy, Director. AFS Ltd

“I was particularly disappointed with the poor quality of support AFS had encountered from their previous IT supplier. This is particularly bewildering as they has done a reasonable job with the installation. But this poor customer care particularly irritates me as I believe it reflects badly on the industry as a whole and makes my job all the more harder. At 4IT we recognise the after sales support is just as important as the original installation. We are only happy when the customer is happy, it's as simple as that!” – Mark Moran, Director, 4IT Systems Ltd