

CASE STUDY

DISTRIBUTION SECTOR

POUPART



Poupart Limited is one of the UK's oldest fresh produce companies, charting its origins back to the 1850s. Today it is a leading supplier of quality fruit to both UK and European supermarkets. It connects growers to their retail market and the 'just in time' nature of the logistics places huge pressure on Poupart's IT infrastructure. The company WAN links six sites in the UK and three on the continent and availability and resilience are the key performance requirements.

CHALLENGES

Although it had successfully run its own WAN for a number of years, with sites coming into its head office over Citrix, Poupart became concerned that growth and expansion was stressing the network with IT no longer able to keep pace with dynamic business requirements. There were a number of concerns, specifically:

- The server rooms in head office were vulnerable to both flood and power outages, with a number of incidents causing worrying levels of downtime
- With everything terminating in head office, there was a single point of failure, which had serious implications for business continuity
- The internal 'data centre' was essentially a makeshift facility, not the dedicated, high-end operation that the enterprise, time-sensitive nature of the business demanded
- Too much IT resource was being taken up in either fire-fighting or system house-keeping, as opposed to more value-added activity
- Poupart was struggling to keep pace with the exponential growth in data, its existing tape-based system proving costly and unwieldy to manage effectively.

REALISING THE BENEFITS

We're fresh produce specialists, that's where our expertise lies, so there was no appetite to go out there and invest huge amounts of time, money and energy in creating our own data centre. But we knew we needed to make a step-change, to get our IT provision to a new level of maturity and capability, and outsourcing to the Cloud seemed an obvious route to explore.

Gary Cooper
Infrastructure Manager, Poupart



POUPART

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HOW REDCENTRIC HELPED

With Poupart wanting to maintain control over its systems, Redcentric proposed a colocation solution, with servers physically removed from Poupart's head office and placed into Redcentric's Tier 3 data centre in Harrogate. At the same time, Redcentric also assumed responsibility for managing the WAN and all the UK connecting circuits; it followed that up with the deployment of its managed backup service, consolidating and storing data from across all nine sites.

Gary Cooper is quick to point out that Redcentric offered a lot more than just what could be seen as outsourced 'commodities'. "You could say that hosting is hosting and one data centre environment is very like another, but from the off Redcentric demonstrated that they were far more of an IT partner than just an IT provider. Yes, we now have an IT infrastructure that is far more aligned with the needs of the business but going forward we also have someone who we trust to advise us, to support us, to supply us with additional services moving forward.

It's given us real security and confidence for the future, and it's transformed performance day-to-day. We were in a situation where we were at risk of having, at best, over 200 people unable to access the system or at worst, lorry loads of fruit spoiling, both of which impact the bottom line. We don't have that worry now, and we as an IT team can instead focus on what we're delivering to our end-users and to our customers. Poupart's IT has definitely 'grown up' and you could say it's no longer putting the squeeze on this fantastic fruit business."

TECHNICAL INFO

- Colocation Hosting
- Wide Area Network
- Managed Backup Service

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Gary Cooper believes that the partnership with Redcentric has put Poupart's IT on the strongest possible footing – resilient and responsive, with both cost-efficiency and cost certainty.

Improved resilience and availability

Operations are no longer being impacted, and cargos are no longer vulnerable to spoiling due to downtime. The business needs to run 24/7/365 and the quality of the Redcentric infrastructure is delivering that performance level day in, day out.

Enhanced business continuity

Moving to a highly redundant environment, together with Cloud-based data backup, has transformed Poupart's ability to ride out a disaster, eliminating the single point of failure that existed by virtue of the head office data centre.

Reduced capex

With the bulk of IT costs moving to opex, Poupart has seen significant reductions in capex spend and write downs, whilst also enjoying greater cost predictability, less waste and better value.

Easier monitoring and support

Supporting a 24/7 operation has been greatly simplified, with remote access for the Poupart IT staff backed up by hands and eyes support from the Redcentric team.

Better back-up performance

Backup windows have been dramatically reduced, the associated administration time slashed, and the reliability of restores markedly improved.

More effective team deployment

The internal IT team is no longer being distracted and drained by a compromised infrastructure but can focus its energies and efforts on IT service delivery and supporting staff, clients and strategic IT development.

Bigger resource pool

Poupart wants to concentrate on its core competencies and now knows it can leverage the broad spectrum of skills and services of a genuine IT partner, in a lean, agile and cost-effective manner, as it continues to grow its business

Controlled Cloud journey

With a positive transition into the Cloud behind it, Poupart can now assess potential next steps and make decisions as and when it suits. It is currently looking at MS Exchange on a managed, Software as a Service basis.

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Infrastructure Manager, Poupart

