

Case History: The Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Sadly, Cystic Fibrosis affects 7500 children and young people who have, on average, a life expectancy of 30 years. These sobering figures are what drive The Cystic Fibrosis Trust in the battle to win the hearts, minds and generosity of the public.

This challenge is at the centre of CFT's operations and, with charities having to compete more actively for public donations, CFT has had to invest in the resources to do the job, and that includes IT. So it was that in April 2005, IT Manager Peter Hawkins decided to expand his department by 50%. As Peter will tell you, dryly, "That made a total of two of us!"

It's the classic example of the recent expansion in the SME market that has forced vendors and service providers to reassess their SME strategy. With IT prices falling and SME's enjoying sustained growth over recent years, suddenly the small business has become a key investor in IT at every level – networks, infrastructure and software.

One company that has responded to this opportunity is Networks Unlimited (NU). Run by Managing Director Peter Reynolds, NU was approached in January 2005 by Adventnet, an unknown software developer based in India with an OE client base that reads like the who's who of network management (IBM, HP, CA, etc). Having built network management tools for others, Adventnet decided to build their own, and they called it the ManageEngine range.

Having signed up as UK distributor, NU immediately found themselves with a staggering range of 14 new IT management tools, all with exceptional functionality and all priced well within SME budgets. Some 12 months later, there are now 24 products and, according to Peter Reynolds, sales are growing at a rate he has never seen in his 15 years in the business.

Amongst these sales, and typical of the SME customers, was CFT. Having met with NU at the Helpdesk show, Peter Hawkins immediately bought the ManageEngine product ServiceDesk Plus, an IT helpdesk and asset management software tool. The initial

purpose of ServiceDesk was to identify requirements for future IT support – type of faults and time taken to resolve – and to justify IT recruitment. The tool was then used successfully in its more conventional role, managing support for the IT 40 users at the Bromley head office plus the other 70 users at the regional offices.

After this, there was no looking back. Attracted by the low cost/high functionality formula, Peter Hawkins went on to buy OpManager, the complete systems, network and applications monitoring tool, quickly followed by ScanFi, Patch Manager, Eventlog Analyzer and, most recently, Applications Manager.

“They all possess the same qualities – easy to use, easy to configure and easy to understand,” says Hawkins. “There are several good products in this arena, but this beats the lot in terms of functionality and sheer value for money”.

So what does the future hold for CFT’s IT strategy? There are only another 18 ManageEngine products to go for the full set!

“Our big issue is alignment. Fulfilling the business needs of both our internal and external customers. There’s no room these days for guesswork or gut-feel. We must have a clear business case for all our investment.”

“The charity market is like any other. We must compete for funds and we need to adapt to constantly changing market conditions. With this in mind, we’re looking at a converged voice and data network, with all the additional services that could bring to our operations.”

“Either way, it’s affordable software like ManageEngine that’s enabling us to consider these sort of things. Not that there is software like ManageEngine!”

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Cystic Fibrosis affects 7500 children and young people, with 50% of sufferers under 15 years old. Founded in 1964, The Cystic Fibrosis Trust undertakes medical and scientific research into the disease and provides sufferers with an extensive range of support, both clinical and financial. Over the past 70 years, the average life expectancy of those with the disease has been increased from 3 months to more than 30 years. To maintain this progress, the Trust needs to raise £8 million per year. www.cftrust.org.uk

Networks Unlimited

Networks Unlimited are an independent IT services company specialising in enterprise IT security and infrastructure management providing specialist Technology, Consulting and Managed Services across all sectors of commerce and industry. Appointed as UK Distributor for ManageEngine solutions in early 2005, the growth seen by the company has been unprecedented and the range has increased from just one to over 20 products. Founded in 1992, the company continues to focus on enterprise network management and security solutions in the solid belief that experience really counts when it comes to providing quality and service.