

# Digital Transformation: How Axess Systems help MRL Consulting find three unicorns in an afternoon



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## Background

MRL Consulting Group is a UK-based international recruitment company whose mission is to match the very best executive, technical and financial talent in the world with the most demanding posts in the Semiconductor, IT and Finance sector.

Characterising the challenging nature of their recruitment work, MRL IT Manager Chris Swain says: "We often think our role as having to find three unicorns in an afternoon!"

"Our business constantly scans for global opportunities and the associated talent pool to find the best of the best, for the best. We hold the crème de la crème of CVs internationally and need to be highly agile at matching people to contracts, to save ourselves substantial missed opportunity costs.

"As a result, our business is extremely time critical and needs reliable, stable, and above all, secure IT infrastructure to support it."

## Pressing need to implement Digital Transformation

When MRL's nine-year-old legacy

system was nearing the end of its life, Chris knew a lot of the business continuity burden rested on the shoulders of IT.

"For a short time, it felt like I was spinning plates and chasing my tail. We were getting quite a bit of push-back from users over less responsive PCs and difficulties getting internet access.

"Behind the scenes, it was increasingly clear that our old infrastructure was creaking, and it was becoming unsupportable, which was a risk I needed to eliminate as quickly as possible."

"MRL needed a complete overhaul of our IT platform."

As part of the digital transformation process, MRL undertook a thorough review of its operations, technology and people.

"By undertaking this review, we identified we needed to up-skill ourselves and adapt our systems to meet the fast-changing demands of our CRM and talent search." MRL and Axess Systems had an established working relationship since their previous IT implementation and invited Axess Systems along with two other suppliers to tender for their new



**MRL**  
Recruiting Excellence  
EST. 1997

### MRL Consulting Group Stats

- Established 1997
- UK head office in Hove, Sussex
- 60 employees
- 3 European locations
- Specialist head-hunters in niche Semiconductor, IT and Finance markets

### Project Stats

- 3 physical Dell EMC servers, switches and storage
- VMware virtualisation to 30-40 server environments
- Citrix network, security and front-end
- 3 week implementation window

## BENEFITS

MRL are now enjoying a fully supported, stable and secure IT environment, which is enabling them to focus all their attention on making placements and winning contracts for their clients.

Crucially, the show-stopping business continuity risk has been eliminated, and Chris can sleep better at night!

"The last thing our users want to be worrying about is whether and how long it will take to log in to the system each day. With the new platform, all these concerns are swept aside, helping our team to be much more productive and efficient.

"We've also become much more proactive and sophisticated in the way we track down talent – which wasn't possible in the old environment. In a highly competitive market, we need to keep every advantage."

digital transformation project.

### The process to appoint a trusted IT Partner

“Axess Systems were enthusiastic from the outset, whereas the other suppliers were more cautious. I knew the extent of the changes I wanted to make – and I wanted a partner who would be courageous enough to face the challenge with me!”

While the other suppliers tried to pick holes in Axess Systems' approach, Simon Graver and the entire team from Axess Systems made a much more honest appraisal of why the other suppliers had put forward what they had.

Axess Systems also supported Chris as he put the business case to the Board, helping the directors understand the benefit and importance of upgrading the infrastructure.

“In my mind, this showed Axess Systems had a much more comprehensive view of the solution and had confidence in the benefits we would achieve.”

Chris and the MRL Board were also swayed by the way Axess Systems embraced their vision for a system transformation.

“In the end, the simple reason we chose Axess Systems was because they demonstrated a vast amount of knowledge and expertise.”

### From solution to implementation

Once the contract was awarded, Chris was struck by the professionalism of the Axess Systems engineering team, with the implementation taking three weeks in total, leading up to a go-live date in February 2019.

Following an IT infrastructure

Assessment to understand the resource usage in the legacy systems, Axess Systems led Chris through a reverse engineering whiteboard process, helping identify the right solution to support MRL's vision.

Explaining the nature of the whiteboard sessions, Chris says: “Axess Systems left no stone un-turned and asked about everything from our goals and objectives through to Network Configuration and user device personalisation. It was reassuringly thorough!”

“We looked at where we were, and where we wanted to be. The team at Axess Systems was very good at listening and finding out what we needed. At no point did they try and push a solution that would not have suited us.”

Chris was impressed with the efficiency and flexibility of the Axess Systems representatives, who combined on-site implementation tasks and remote support as required.

Acknowledging the adaptability of the Axess Systems engineer, Chris says: “Right at the beginning of the implementation, we faced a power outage issue in our existing legacy environment. John from Axess Systems, who was on-site, went the extra mile in helping us rescue the situation overnight so the business could resume the following day.

“To me, this shows Axess Systems absolutely understood the issues facing our business – and were prepared to go beyond the call of duty to help us out.”

### We aim to simplify

Senior Account Manager of Axess Systems Simon Graver comments: “It's a pleasure to work with Chris and the team at MRL. They are running an extremely IT-dependent organisation,



so we appreciate the importance to them of a stable, secure and reliable platform.

“We provide our clients with a single point of contact across their entire IT hardware, security and storage infrastructure, as well as providing solution services and consultancy.

“Although we are Dell EMC specialists, we aren't about shoe-horning in a single vendor solution. This is important to clients like MRL – who then benefit from our knowledge of how to get the best performance out of Dell EMC products in multiple contexts and business settings.”

“Axess Systems need to keep doing what they're doing! Their knowledge, expertise, flexibility, understanding and enthusiasm have been invaluable to MRL – and I would definitely recommend their services.”

Chris - MRL