

# Supporting the Evolution of a UK leading Land development and Infrastructure Services provider

## Redesigning internal and external IT operations to keep pace with rapid business development

Hargreaves Services plc is a diversified group with over £210m in revenue, more than 1,250 employees and offices in the UK, Southeast Asia, and South Africa, covering three investment propositions - Land, Services, and European Raw Materials.



**Hargreaves Land** specialises in brownfield regeneration - the redevelopment of abandoned, underused or derelict land previously used for industrial or commercial purposes - and has over 9,000 acres of land in its portfolio.

**Hargreaves Services** are provided through a number of subsidiary trading entities, market leaders of a wide range of environmental and industrial services across the UK, Southeast Asia and South Africa.

**Hargreaves Raw Materials** is a specialist supplier of raw materials to major European customers in the steel, foundry, smelting, non-ferroalloy, sugar, limestone, insulation, refractory and ceramic industries.

In 2020, Durham-based Hargreaves Services, one of the last remaining coal mine operators in the UK, began to wind down its mining operations. With carbon reduction plans meaning that demand for coal was heading towards zero, the leadership team embarked on a brave new long-term strategy to pivot away from coal and instead leverage its land development, services, and industrial expertise.

Underpinning this diversification strategy would be the creation of a new IT infrastructure capable of supporting a business with ambitious growth plans.



**“Principle Networks delivered an infrastructure that has enabled the business to move forward and achieve its goals.”**

Dave Lewis, Group IT Manager

# The Challenge

Hargreaves wasn't just implementing a new IT infrastructure. It was changing the direction of the entire business. It went from being a single entity to an organisation comprising a number of sub-divisions across several locations. For example, land development, environmental, logistics and minerals businesses, materials handling operations, mechanical and electrical maintenance services, an earthworks organisation working on HS2, creation of Hargreaves Asia with contracts to work with China Light and Power and Hong Kong Electric, and the acquisition of a civil engineering business working primarily in the water industry.

Hargreaves required an IT strategy that was agile, scalable, and able to support digital transformation and sharing large amounts of data. Furthermore, it was also becoming a customer-facing business, so it needed a robust, secure network that could handle internal and external traffic.

To become a forward-thinking company of the future, Hargreaves needed to shift from traditional office-based connectivity and fully managed private MPLS networks, based in on-premise data centres, to an SD-WAN and cloud environment.

**“Principle Networks go beyond providing technical solutions. From the moment we started the different projects, the team understood our needs, and they weren't at all phased by the scale of the transformation. They understand that any new IT platform must support long-term business objectives to deliver value, and that's exactly how we approached it.”**



Dave Lewis, Group IT Manager



# The Method

Principle Networks worked with Hargreaves to audit its systems and then redesign internal and external IT operations to keep pace with its rapid business development. The team created a plan to redesign the existing wide area network, upgrade its data centres and shift several processes and systems to a cloud environment. They provided recommendations on the systems to implement, the technology required and what to do with old hardware. This helped to achieve quick sign-off from the board so that the digital transformation could get underway.

Hargreaves Group IT has transitioned from a legacy Cap-Ex model to an Op-Ex-based function, replacing the purchase of hardware and software with subscription-based agreements.

The most important aspect of the implementation process was ensuring business continuity. The team recommended tried and tested technologies that gave Hargreaves the confidence that business would continue without disruption. In terms of providing a solution that offered scalability, Principle Networks worked closely with the Hargreaves IT team to ensure they built a platform that could meet both their immediate and future requirements.

Implementing new systems meant Hargreaves also needed to develop a strategy for securing its infrastructure, data protection and information security. Principle Networks specialist engineers installed comprehensive firewalls and cybersecurity monitoring tools to ensure data could be exchanged securely between workstreams.



**“Working with Principle Networks has been integral to us achieving our digital transformation goals. Without their expertise, we wouldn’t be the business we are today. We’re excited about what the future holds and the next stage of this partnership.”**

Dave Lewis, Group IT Manager

The outbreak of the global pandemic accelerated Hargreaves’s transformation. When lockdowns were enforced, it had already been working with Principle Networks to build a robust, secure and reliable network, meaning hundreds of employees could shift to remote working virtually overnight.

The final stage of the implementation process was to achieve compliance certification, so all new systems and networks had to be designed with this in mind. Hargreaves worked with the team at Principle Networks to implement systems and processes that were compliant with current laws and regulations.



- Shift from MPLS on-premise network to SD-WAN and cloud-based cybersecurity platforms
- Redesign of Data Centre and internal and external IT infrastructure
- £260,000 reduction in spending on IT hardware

# The Results

When Principle Networks began working with Hargreaves in 2018, its annual spending on IT infrastructure was over £395,000. In 2023/24, that figure is estimated to be no more than £135,000, a 66% reduction in spending, which has saved the business more than £260,000. This money has been reinvested in cloud computing, connectivity and security solutions, several managed by Principle Networks.

Furthermore, implementing the new SD-WAN cloud environment has enabled Hargreaves to continue its expansion and acquisition of services without compromising the level of service its customers receive. In just six years, Hargreaves has transformed from a UK-based coal supplier to an expert in land development, infrastructure services, environmental and industrial projects.



**At Principle Networks, we exist to transform how enterprises connect and secure their operations, empowering our customers to thrive in a fast-moving, digital-first world. We're trusted cybersecurity specialists who go beyond traditional consultancy and managed services, built on the foundational belief that doing the right thing matters.**

Our approach is distinctive: we deliver flexible, best-in-class solutions built on trusted global platforms that our clients truly own. Unlike providers who lock clients into proprietary systems, we provide integrated, cloud-native platforms that eliminate technical debt, consolidate fragmented point products, and lower total cost of ownership. If we don't earn your trust or deliver value, you're free to move on - we believe that's the strongest endorsement of our services.

In today's digital landscape where data is currency and threats are constant, Principle Networks helps organisations take control of their environments, reduce cyber risk with confidence, and build secure, resilient operations that drive business success.

## Contact us today

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