U-POL

case study **at a glance**

Client	U-POL
Solutions	Configuration, Storage Structured Cabling and Virtualisation
Vendor	Dell and VMware

Overview

- New virtual infrastructure implemented in only two months
- Total provided a full range of IT systems and services, including SAN, servers, networking, telephone system, cabling and desktops
- Total completely re-cabled U-POL's main manufacturing site, with no interruption to production
- Total's strong relationship with Dell helped U-POL procure the systems it needed, efficiently and quickly
- Total provides PCs that are already imaged and asset tagged, saving time

Manufacturer U-POL has chosen Total as its main IT partner, including providing all equipment and related services when moving to a new head office and data centre. Total has also supplied IT systems for the company's main factory, and undertaken two major cabling projects.

Client

U-POL is a global manufacturer of automotive refinish products including bodyfillers, coatings, aerosols, polishing compounds and consumables, with sales in over 100 countries. Its worldwide manufacturing base is in Wellingborough, with a UK head office in London.

Business driver

A move to a new head office plus an ageing infrastructure meant that U-POL needed to invest in a completely new IT infrastructure. This included a new Storage Area Network (SAN), servers, networking and cabling, and building an in-house comms room.

"U-POL's systems were old with single points of failure, so we needed to put in a brand new computer system to run the company, based on a virtualised infrastructure," explains Andrew Speakmaster, Infrastructure Manager at U-POL.

Solution

U-POL decided to work with Total for the infrastructure project, with the decision partly due to Andrew's long experience with Total. He comments, "I've worked with them for four or five years at multiple companies – I'm not easy to impress, but with Total I just send one email or make one phone call, and it's done and I don't need to worry."

The solution required the main production systems to be moved out to a data centre in London's Docklands, while onsite systems such as security, domain controller and telephony were to run locally at the head office. At the data centre, all the virtual machines needed to be replicated for resilience.

The new infrastructure was designed and specified by Andrew, and he then handed his requirements to Total, to help make it a reality. Based on long-term good experiences, Andrew chose a system based around equipment from Dell.

"The only only thing I needed design assistance with was the specification of the SAN, because we were building it from scratch and had to estimate the requirements in terms of capacity, speed and tiering," says Andrew.

Once the design was finalised, Andrew worked with Total's engineers to build and test the system in Total's Configuration Centre, to enable a rapid on-site deployment.

As part of the head office move, Total handled all the cabling.

Due to the success of the cabling at head office, U-POL awarded Total a second contract, to carry out a re-cabling project at its Wellingborough manufacturing facility – which needed to be completed without interfering with production.

Total worked from Andrew's high-level infrastructure design to carry out the detailed design work, and all implementation work for the structured cabling across the site, including providing new fibre and upgrading from Cat 5 to Cat 6. As part of the cabling work, Total's engineers needed to analyse legacy connections that had been in place for

many years, and determine exactly what links were required.

Total is also providing new IT systems at Wellingborough for a major IT refresh that will enable the company to grow to twice its current size, including servers, storage and networking.

Additionally, Total provides all of U-POL’s desktop and laptop PCs, all sourced from Dell. These are first delivered to Total, where they are imaged and asset tagged. Total then keeps the computers in stock, ready to ship to U-POL on request.

Benefits

“For the head office move, Total put me in touch with Dell and arranged all the meetings so I could configure the storage effectively, which was very helpful,” says Andrew. “I couldn't have done all this without Total as the middleman, and Total can get things from Dell that I would not have the power to do myself.”

“We were under time pressure to do a year’s work in only two months, and it was stressful and hectic, but everything that Total was involved in was completed ahead of schedule,” says Andrew. “Without Total’s assistance, we would not have been able to finish the job on time.”

“We did have one problem when a truckload of kit was turned away by the data centre, even though it was all expected and security cleared – this could have been a major issue as we were going to start the build that day, but Total were able to get it sorted out.”

“For me, everything has to be done spot on, to the highest standards – and Total does that,” says Andrew. “They understand my needs, and I get what I want.”

The challenging cabling work at the manufacturing site was completed with no interruptions to production.

Andrew comments, “To Total’s engineers, cabling is an art form – their work is excellent, everything is exactly where it should be, and it makes my job easy.”

“Total is now U-POL’s IT supplier for everything,” says Andrew. “They’re very helpful, and what’s important to me is the service – they say what they’re going to do, and I don’t have to ask twice.”

“Total handling our PCs is a massive timesaver, and makes it so easy for me to work – previously, our guys were wasting hours on building each computer from scratch,” says Andrew. “I can put in an order for 100 desktops and get the bulk price for 100, then Total will warehouse them for me, and I get them delivered as I need them. Total are so flexible.”

When required, Total is also able to supply equipment at short notice, and Andrew comments, “There have been times when a staff member has come to me on a Friday night and said I’ve lost my laptop and need a new one tomorrow because I’m working from home on Saturday – I phoned Total, and they delivered it in the morning.”

“Overall, if I tell Total there are things missing or something doesn’t work, they get straight on it – and the next thing I know I get a phone call saying the equipment will be turning up,” says Andrew. “I’ve worked with my account manager long enough that there is a good level of trust, and he’s saved me a lot in terms of time over the years.”

“Total has a no-nonsense attitude, and customers always get the care and attention that they deserve – I feel we are being looked after,” says Andrew. “On the larger projects, I go out to tender, but Total’s pricing always comes back as the most competitive.”

“I have recommended Total to many companies,” concludes Andrew. “Service is what’s most important to me, and with Total, I get exactly what I want, when I want it.”

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