

**Your partner for complete IT solutions**



## **Full systems upgrade ensures business continuity at PMT (GB) Ltd**

With ageing hardware and software approaching End-of-Life, PMT (GB) Ltd required a full systems upgrade to ensure business continuity, security and compliance. To avoid unnecessary costs, user downtime and disruption, they needed it done fast by trusted experts who knew their business. PMT looked to their longstanding IT support provider, Quintech, to advise on the most suitable solutions and manage the transition. After a successful implementation, PMT are now enjoying the benefits of operating current technologies allowing them to focus on new business opportunities and growth.

### **BENEFITS AT A GLANCE**

- Full project management saves time and resources
- Seamless transition completed on time to plan
- Remote user configuration reduces business time and costs
- Minimal business downtime and disruption
- Cloud based applications allow user access and sharing anytime, anywhere
- Virtual servers and robust back-up system ensure business continuity
- User Security Suite significantly reduces risk of cyber-attacks and malware
- Efficient systems compatible with latest technologies

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PMT are leaders in the supply and service of instrumentation including particle counters, electrostatic control, microbial air samplers and instantaneous microbial detection. With headquarters in Malvern, Worcestershire, PMT is part of a group of independent companies with more than 60 employees operating throughout Europe and the US.

The servers were old and becoming fragile, there had been a reduction in UPS performance, and much of the software was Windows 7 and approaching End-of-Life. Everything needed updating. However, the group operates a common ERP system, hosted in Germany and remotely accessed by all international users. The ERP system, provided by a third party, Software-Schmiede, is integrated with the Accounts Application Package - Sage 50. Ensuring compliance between the systems was going to be critical to the running of the business.

Ian Norman, General Manager of PMT, *"We needed to ensure we were keeping up with technology and that there was decent life in the equipment. It was a case of it's old, it's fragile, and we needed to make sure we were in a position to keep going".* Failure to upgrade would have been a risk to the business. *"If the server goes offline then we stop and we cannot function".*

Having delivered previous successful migrations, PMT knew they could trust Quintech to provide the best solutions for the business. Ian Norman: *"We rely on Quintech to advise us on what we should be doing because they are the experts."* To move the project forward, Ian Norman and Quintech liaised with the IT Director in Germany, Dirk Jessen, who provided a map of what the business required and importantly what was required by the ERP system. *"It was about getting the best fit for what we needed but with the financial aspect in mind."*

### Office 365

Quintech's recommendation was that the migration to cloud-based Microsoft Office 365 represented the best solution and value for money. Office 365 enables access over the internet to Microsoft Office tools including Word, PowerPoint and Excel, using Outlook for email. Other features include SharePoint, Teams, Skype for Business and OneDrive.

PMT had a couple of technical concerns about moving to Office 365. Firstly, one of their sister companies had encountered a troublesome experience when an IT company in Belgium were not knowledgeable enough with integrating Microsoft Office 365, which led to issues. Secondly, PMT are located in a rural location where broadband internet connection is poor. They use Airband, which is a service provided by satellite dish as opposed to phone line. PMT questioned whether the download speed would be high enough to cope with a cloud based application such as O365. On the other hand, not moving to the cloud would have meant the business would need to invest significantly more on physical servers. As a highly experienced Microsoft partner, and having good knowledge of PMT's business, Quintech were well placed to provide a robust and detailed project plan of the migration, assuring PMT of a seamless transition. Quintech were confident the download speed PMT were achieving would be sufficient to run Office 365 well. It is proving to be the right decision.



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## ERP and Sage

There were two major compliancy aspects to address during the move to Office 365: 1) the ERP system hosted in Germany and 2) the company's Accounts Application Package in the UK, Sage 50, which is integrated with the ERP system. Additionally, Sage 50 needed upgrading, so there was also the need to ensure compliance with the new version of software.

Quintech had previously written a code to allow accounts information from the ERP system to be imported to Sage 50. Prior to the migration, they rewrote the code to be compliant with the latest version of Sage 50.

Quintech managed the whole project including the coordination with Software-Schmeide, who came to the UK during the migration. This saved PMT valuable time and resources that were better deployed elsewhere.

## User set-up without the hassle

PMT have engineers across the UK. To save the business time and travel costs, all users were configured to use Office 365 remotely. There were some international users who were configured remotely, too. During this process, there were lots of questions for Quintech, in particular project manager Lee Etheridge, Operations Director. Ian Norman: *"Lee is excellent. He's always got time for you and there to help you out. If he can't help you there and then, he'll come back to you and get it sorted. In fact that's one of the reasons we stick with Quintech – the support we've had over the past 13 years has been excellent."*

As is the case with many businesses, email is relied on heavily and it was vital there was no disruption for users during their transition from the current on-premise setup to Office 365. Quintech completed the transfer within one day without any downtime or disruption.

Using Office 365 means the business now benefits from the ability of users to share and access information from any location, any time.

## Ensuring business continuity

Three physical servers reaching five years old were multi-tasking under heavy loads and there had been a reduction in UPS performance. Quintech recommended the move to a "server virtualisation" set up. This involves the process of using software to create multiple partitions, or virtual instances on a server, each capable of running independently. Each server has its own unique defined role allowing best performance, resilience, maintenance and disaster recovery.

This multi-backup system configuration means that in the event of a disaster, any server can be restored within 20 minutes, reducing downtime and improving business continuity. With the main server backed up to the Cloud – Microsoft Azure – even if this goes down users can continue to work. Another benefit is that it negates the need for back-up tapes which were time consuming and generally a hassle.

Quintech configured the hardware off-site and on the day of installation PMT experienced half a day's downtime, which had been planned and prepared for. Ian Norman: *"There was minimal impact to the business because we were able to prepare for half a day's downtime. The installation went smoothly and to plan. There were no issues or desperate phone calls!"*



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### Ultimate security

PMT were using a local antivirus system, Symantec, which was upgraded to Quintech's User Security Suite. More than just anti-virus software, it includes features such as content control (disallowing particular websites) and a traffic light system which pre-scans websites before the user hits them and categorises them by level of security. With most viruses now occurring via links to websites and not email, this significantly reduces the risk of cyber-attacks and malware. The User Security Suite service monitors every user's pc and/or laptop to ensure it is kept up-to-date with the latest security updates. Quintech are so confident in this product that they will remove any malware free-of-charge should it occur.

Speaking of the overall project, it is clear to see that Quintech have certainly proven their capability and value once again to PMT. Ian Norman: *"The most impressive thing was the way the whole project was managed - it was really good - a huge time and hassle saver. Quintech kept us informed every stage of the way and what was really important is that they had our interests at the forefront and planned around us."*

### What next for PMT?

With their IT systems and hardware fully up-to-date, PMT can enjoy the benefit of operating more efficiently and securely in the knowledge they are using the latest technology and importantly which is most suitable for their business. Now the focus is on steering the business successfully through Brexit and investing in marketing activities to increase brand awareness and create new opportunities.



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