

Success story - IP VPN



Calteq



Snapshot

Royston-based Calteq was founded in 2003 with the vision of being a communications provider with a difference. Instead of creating value for shareholders, the firm focuses on providing exceptional customer experiences through the provision of quality data, voice and mobile connectivity and excellent customer service.

The requirement

When one of Calteq's biggest clients invited them to tender for a sizeable IP VPN solution, they looked to Entanet to provide the necessary support.

The solution

The project requirements were extensive; reliability, security, cost-effectiveness and flexibility to allow for future growth were all 'must-haves'. The final IP-VPN solution included 1600 ADSL connections to provide data connectivity to the high street stores of a well known retailer, plus a leased line for high-speed, secure connectivity to its head office. Colocation space and firewall protection were also part of the solution.

The benefits

- The quality of the solution provided has resulted in a much stronger business relationship between Calteq and their customer, with Calteq taking on increased responsibility for the supply of connectivity services
- Access to Mirada and one point of contact means that Calteq are able to actively manage the complex solution implemented on their customer's behalf, adding value at every stage
- The expertise provided by Entanet meant that Calteq were able to meet requirements the customer didn't realise they had, and at a price point that they are more than happy with

Conclusion

Having a single one-stop shop was really important to us. Entanet were able to offer us all the components of the private WAN themselves - there were no other third parties involved. With all other suppliers we've dealt with prior to that we'd have to involve two or three other suppliers.



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In-depth

Good teamwork delivers a great result

With a strong focus on the customer, Calteq needed to find a supplier that could deliver all the elements of a nationwide private WAN, and really work as part of a team.

When Mike Stephenson and Nigel Willetts founded communications services company Calteq in 2003, they had a clear vision. "We established our company to focus on customer service", says Mike. "I know everybody says that - we did it for a particular reason."

Both of them had been working in the communications sector for a number of years and ended up at fairly large and successful companies. They decided to set up their own firm when they discovered that they shared the same view on how a communications services company should be run.

"Both Nigel and I had come from businesses that were AIM-listed and more focused on the shareholders. We set up our business to cater for what we felt was a gap in the market; customer service was key to every element of what we wanted to do."

Right from the start, Calteq aimed to be different in this respect. "We established relationships with suppliers we could trust - the likes of BT Openreach, BT Wholesale, Vodafone, and O2. We went to the big players from day one and we invested heavily in systems, so everything is automated. We now have a turnover of just over £4 million and we have some large clients who trust us and some who have been with us for over ten years."

Calteq has maintained that philosophy to this day. "Whenever we look at a new supplier, they have to have market credibility, they have to be able to support us and thus allow us to support our clients."

A growing reputation

Calteq's approach has worked well. Customers loved being the number-one priority and told other businesses how good Calteq were. Over the next 13 years, the company grew to its present headcount of 14, all of whom (because all the operational processes are automated) are in customer service. Calteq has no sales staff and all its new business comes through referrals by customers or other third parties.

As of September 2016, Calteq has more than 650 customers - a figure that continues to grow month on month. While they come from many sectors, retail is a particular strength and one of Calteq's established and best-known clients is the very successful shoe repairs and key cutting business, Timpson.

Calteq has provided landlines and mobile services to Timpson for around six years and at the start of 2016, the IT director asked the company to bid for its

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data connectivity services as well. Mike Stephenson explains the situation at the time. "Timpson were with another company and the service they had been getting was patchy to say the least. They felt the pricing was out of kilter and the supplier was just providing simple broadband instead of offering real solutions."

Extensive requirements

The project requirements were extensive. Calteq was asked to quote for a DSL-based private WAN, 1600 ADSL connections for Timpson shops, plus leased lines and co-location space along with firewall protection. The contract had been put out to tender and this meant that Calteq faced strong competition from the likes of BT, Vodafone and Kingston Communications.

While Calteq already had some good partnerships with suppliers, what it really needed for this project was a capable and flexible data comms supplier that could deliver all the required connectivity services, high levels of reliability and shared Calteq's own customer-focused ethos - and do it all at a competitive price.

It had used other data companies over the years, many of them well-known and established, but always found there was something lacking in what they offered. "We'd had experience of working with six ISPs and data providers prior to finding Entanet and all of them left something to be desired. It was either on the technical side, on their support, or on their pricing", says Mike.

Real credibility

This time around Calteq wanted to make sure the supplier had real credibility and technical prowess. While he can't remember precisely where he had heard about Entanet, the company's name came up as a prospective supplier and Calteq got in touch. They were impressed with Entanet from the start. "We got a very good feeling from day one. A, they were keen to deal with us, and B, able to offer the support that we needed at that time."

Entanet's Business Development Consultant, along with their Pre-Sales Technical Manager visited Calteq to discuss Timpson's specific requirements and worked together with the company's staff to design a solution that would meet their needs. "To be honest, Timpson only had an outline of where they wanted to go to with the solution and we, in conjunction with Entanet, created that solution." said Mike Stephenson. We sold it to Timpson and I have to say that the solution was perfect - it matched exactly what they wanted."

The new solution offered excellent data communications and much higher levels of security. It also met expectations with respect to overall costs. Timpson is delighted with the results and so is Mike. "Having a single one-stop shop was really important to us. Entanet were able to offer us all the components of the private WAN themselves - there were no other third parties involved. With all other suppliers we've dealt with prior to that we'd have had to involve two or three other suppliers. But Entanet did the whole lot."

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Plain sailing

From that point on it was plain sailing. The proposition was accepted and in May 2016, the private WAN was installed and the roll-out of the ADSL connections to the shops began. Also in the summer of 2016, Timpson took over the running of the dry-cleaning operations in 116 Morrison's grocery stores and also acquired the ShoeCare chain, which has 58 UK stores, all of which are now being added to the private network as well. The number of ADSL connections is expected to be more than 2000 by the end of 2016.

When Calteq has needed support, Mike has been impressed with Entanet. "Their service is truly 24/7. We can actually speak to people when we need to. With a lot of ISPs it's via webchats and things like that, which isn't really what we're about at all."

Calteq has now started to look to its partnership with Entanet to meet the data requirements of other customers and based on his experience so far, Mike expects the partnership to flourish.

The two teams really work well together, he says. "When we are working with them as a team, they are listening to what we say as well and the solution is constructed between us. They don't have a set, defined product they force upon you. They listen to what you are saying; to our needs and our customers' needs and then between us we construct a solution. It's a bespoke solution for each client. I think that sets them aside from other suppliers."

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