Success story - Leased lines

entanet
a CityFibre company

RICOH

Snapshot

Ricoh UK Products Ltd is the UK based manufacturing operation of Ricoh Group, a leading global manufacturer of printing solutions and services. As well as assembling office solutions products to standard specifications for general sale, Ricoh UK Products Ltd also provides a build-to-order service, recycling operation and runs a round-the-clock production operation on toner cartridges.
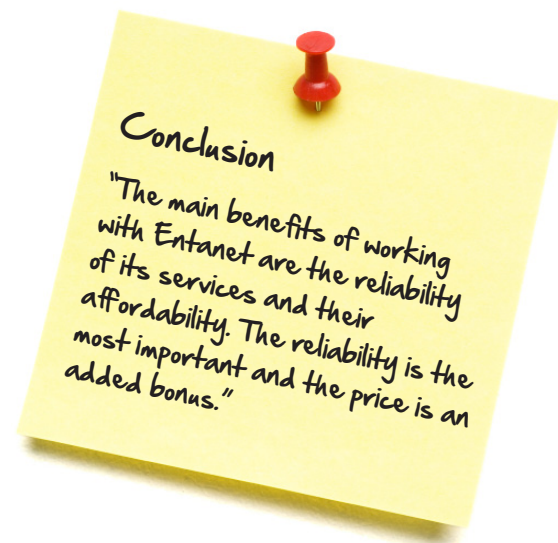
The requirement

Ricoh UK Products needed to improve response times and reliability and reduce costs when it upgraded its existing leased lines in order to support remote workers and communicate more efficiently with its suppliers in Europe, the Far East and headquarters in Japan.

The solution

Entanet installed four 100Mbps leased lines to support business critical communications with suppliers across the world and connect UK based operations.

The benefits

▸ Ricoh UK Products leased line solutions provided it with significantly improved reliability to support business critical communications.

▸ The 100Mbps leased lines also support future growth including the implementation of a complete disaster recovery solution.

▸ Response times were significantly improved with increased connectivity speeds.

▸ They also benefit from zero downtime, ADSL backups and knowledgeable UK based technical support in the unlikely case of a fault.

▸ Ricoh UK Products have significantly reduced their monthly costs.

Conclusion

"The main benefits of working with Entanet are the reliability of its services and their affordability. The reliability is the most important and the price is an added bonus."

In-depth

Reliability is the deciding factor...

When Ricoh UK Products Ltd needed to upgrade its Internet connection to ensure it maintained the very best and open lines of communication with vital suppliers, Entanet provided a totally reliable and cost-effective solution.

The Ricoh Group is a leading global solutions provider with a strong heritage in customer focused technical excellence and an equally strong passion for its corporate social responsibility. Founded in 1936 in Tokyo, Japan, the company provides a wide range of sustainable, innovation-driven printing solutions and services that enable customers to advance their ideas and enhance their productivity. Its product range now spans laser printers, copiers, scanners, multifunctional devices, document management software, fax machines, duplicators and office consumables.

Ricoh has a significant and well-established presence in Europe and has three manufacturing locations, one of which is located in Telford where it employs some 700 people.

As well as assembling office solutions products to standard specifications for general sale, Ricoh UK Products as the UK operation is formally known, also provides a build-to-order service for Ricoh's UK and European sales teams. It also runs a round-the-clock production operation on toner cartridges. Another smaller UK satellite warehouse is located at Wellingborough and a manufacturing plant is located in Stirling, Scotland.

> "The Ricoh Group is a leading global solutions provider with a strong heritage in customer focused technical excellence and an equally strong passion for its corporate social responsibility."
>
> *Peter Shankland,*
> *IT Technical Specialist,*
> *Ricoh UK Products Ltd*

Vital communications

Just about all communication with suppliers is conducted electronically, so having a good, fast and reliable Internet connection is vital, as Peter Shankland, IT Technical Specialist at Ricoh UK Products explains: "We do most of our ordering via the WAN links and our suppliers are located all over Europe. Our Supply Chain Management department use various scheduling tools and if the WAN links went down, we would not be able to check on the status of orders and deliveries. That would soon have a knock-on effect for production."

Other key suppliers are even further away in China and the Far East, while the Ricoh headquarters and production locations are located in Japan. Keeping these lines of communication open without online access would be even more difficult. With no Internet connection, the factory's ability to meet customer demand would be badly impacted within a couple of days, says Peter.

Around 450 of Ricoh UK Products' staff need continuous access to the Internet while another 150 use it periodically, Peter notes. A proportion of the company's workforce is also increasingly mobile, with around 75 personnel requiring remote access to systems on a regular basis.

Success story - Leased lines

Fast and responsive

Ricoh UK Products has been using Entanet as its connectivity supplier since 2004. It has four leased lines – one for Internet connectivity and three that link other UK based manufacturing sites together.

Before it started working with Entanet, the company had been using basic 448Kbps leased lines to provide connection for the Telford and Wellingborough offices to the Ricoh UK Products European network. This meant that all Internet traffic was being routed through servers in the Netherlands and Japan. Response times were slow, the lines were very expensive to rent and there had been a number of reliability problems.

By this time the need for fast, responsive and most importantly, reliable, connectivity between the Telford site and key suppliers had grown significantly and Ricoh UK Products started to look at the alternatives. It examined options from a number of other service providers but these did not promise much in the way of cost-reduction or improved performance. Ricoh UK Products also asked Entanet to make proposals and the services it put forward met the company's requirements exactly. "We wanted to make sure that the supplier we worked with was reliable. We did not want to have any downtime and we wanted to know that performance would be good enough to meet our needs. We had been made aware of Entanet and the service, support and pricing it offered were very attractive."

"We wanted to make sure that the supplier we worked with was reliable. We did not want to have any downtime and we wanted to know that performance would be good enough to meet our needs. We had been made aware of Entanet and the service, support and pricing it offered were very attractive."

Consistent and reliable

Entanet installed a 2Mbps leased line to provide faster Internet connectivity for Ricoh UK Products in 2004. Since that time the service has proved to be just as consistent and reliable as Peter hoped it would be: "We have had zero downtime and the speeds have been good too. Aside from some initial teething problems, we've had no issues and Entanet has given us excellent support as well."

A few months later, Ricoh UK Products decided to consolidate the key IT functions that had been operating in the two locations into Telford. This meant that good connectivity between the two sites would be essential and the old lines were certainly not up to the job. Having had a good experience with Entanet, Peter had no hesitation in ordering the two additional leased lines that would be needed to support the remote use of business-critical IT functions between the two sites: "The Entanet connection is at least four times faster than what we had before and one of main benefits is the reliability. That allows us to have a more centralised IT and move all IT support here to Telford."

A further 100Mbps leased line was later installed at the manufacturing plant in Stirling, Scotland which replaced two existing 448Kbps connections to deliver a more cost effective and reliable service.

"We have had zero downtime and the speeds have been good too. Aside from some initial teething problems, we've had no issues and Entanet has given us excellent support as well."

Success story - Leased lines

Whilst he is entirely confident that the Entanet leased lines won't let Ricoh UK Products down, two standard ADSL broadband lines have been installed to provide backup for the leased line links. The company also takes advantage of Entanet's Premium Support service for added reassurance. "They always keep us informed if there are any problems and we can call them anytime. Normally, any problems are fixed extremely quickly."

Ready for the future

Ricoh UK Products also decided to upgrade all of its connections to 100Mbps to cope with increasing levels of traffic and allow for further growth in mobile and remote usage, which the company expects to double over the coming year.

It also made sense to upgrade to the faster connection in terms of cost, says Peter: "As the links between Telford and Wellingborough were quite old, upgrading them to 10Mbps was only going to be slightly less expensive than moving to 100Mbps immediately." Another reason for doing this was to provide the additional bandwidth for a full disaster recovery system, which Ricoh UK Products has implemented between the three sites. With all key systems replicated across the two sites, backup solutions at one site kick-in should systems fail at the other.

The main advantage of working with Entanet, says Peter, is being able to rely on the connections. It also offers great value, he notes: "The main benefits of working with Entanet are the reliability of its services and their affordability. The reliability is the most important and the price is an added bonus."