Ricoh ITS helps Rethink Group transform IT funding from a capital to an operational cost

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A leading recruitment and talent management business has used Ricoh IT Services to transform IT funding from a capital to an operational cost. A Ricoh hosted desktop and managed IT service has helped the company cut IT costs by 40 percent and enabled a more agile, mobile and productive workforce.

Executive summary

Name:	Rethink Group Limited
Location:	London, UK
Size:	280 staff
Activity:	Business services

Challenges

- Business strategy to outsource non-core services
- Enable and support a changing and mobile workforce
- Existing IT infrastructure 5 years old

Solution

- Ricoh IT Services
- Hosted desktop & IT infrastructure management
- End user management
- Managed Services

Benefits

- Transforms IT funding from a capital to an operational cost
- Cuts overall IT costs by 40% and per-user costs by 70%
- Faster and easier to set up and decommission users and new locations
- Enables a more agile, mobile and productive workforce
- New IT infrastructure rolled out to 280 users across 3 time zones in a few days

Challenges

The Rethink Group is a recruitment and talent management business. It helps customers transform their organisations by finding and developing key worker and senior management talent. The business has two main service areas - continual recruitment and recruitment process outsourcing services. Rethink operates across most industries, but especially in technology, energy, pharmaceuticals, retail and ecommerce. The company has four office locations in the UK - London, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester - with additional operations in Ireland, Australia and Singapore.

One of Rethink's strategies is to focus on key business services and outsource other non-core operations, one of which is IT. However, the company's exiting desktop infrastructure - supporting 280 staff worldwide - had been in place for five years with hardware, software and a network that was showing its age. Rethink has also made a number of business acquisitions and needed to integrate those IT infrastructures into a standard, corporate environment.

It was an opportunity for Rethink to review its approach to managing desktop services and to move its entire IT infrastructure to an on-demand model. The business wanted to find a supplier that could refresh the desktop infrastructure and provide a cloud-based solution, as well as make IT services more secure, more available and more resilient.

Tim Jacob, Operations Director at the Rethink Group, says, "There were many possible suppliers we could have used, but it was Ricoh that impressed us with its professionalism and depth of resources. I've dealt with many different outsource suppliers and Ricoh's approach to service management is very structured and it's very 'high touch'. Inevitably, there are issues with this type of service, but the management of those issues, having a dedicated account team and the regular contact we get, has been very good."

Solution

As part of its portfolio of Integrated IT Lifecycle Services, Ricoh has provided Rethink with a hosted desktop and managed IT service solution. The first step was a refresh of Rethink's entire IT infrastructure. This included replacing existing office-based workstations with a thin-client, hosted desktop environment, and an upgrade to Microsoft Windows 7 and the latest version of Microsoft Office.

Business applications, such as finance, HR and sales, were taken off-site and located in a hosted data centre along with existing SaaS (software as a service) applications, like candidate tracking and talent management. Wide and local networks were also refreshed.

The switch over to the new IT environment, which involved 280 users in four countries across three time zones, was managed by Ricoh in just a few days. Almost all users were up and running on day one and the entire infrastructure was stable within three months.

Under its strategy of outsourcing non-core activity Rethink has no IT staff. So one of the other key elements of the Ricoh solution is an on-going managed IT service. As well as handling all hardware, software and networking support and maintenance, Ricoh also provides a 24/7 service desk which, for the first time, gives Rethink round-the-clock IT support in the UK and around the world. Ricoh worked with one of its strategic partners to deliver and support the solution.

Rethink also benefits from Ricoh's position as a total document and IT solutions provider. Rethink has deployed a Ricoh Managed Print Service, which integrates with the new IT infrastructure and helps the business use and manage print more efficiently. It has cut printing costs, improved quality and provides a more seamless and easy-to-use service for staff.

Benefits

"The new IT infrastructure that Ricoh has helped Rethink Group develop and manage is a business-critical service, there's no other way to describe it and without it we would not be able to operate," says Jacob.

The Ricoh solution has delivered a number of significant cost and operational benefits for Rethink. Also, by outsourcing its entire IT operation, Ricoh has enabled Rethink to remove a significant operational burden from management.

But perhaps the most important benefit is the way in which the Ricoh solution has helped Rethink transform IT costs. It

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enables Rethink to change a capital expenditure into an operational cost and manage IT budgets more effectively. Rethink estimates that its new on-demand infrastructure, along with the Ricoh managed service, has reduced overall IT costs by up to 40 percent. Part of the saving has been realised by replacing the traditional way of funding staff IT with a per-seat cost; this alone has cut the cost of setting up a new user by up to 70 percent.

With all applications now hosted in the cloud there is minimal desktop set up time or cost. Also, Rethink no longer has to fund large up-front costs or long-term contracts because Ricoh now handles hardware purchasing, stock holding and software licensing.

As well as improved cost control, there have been significant operational advantages. Because of Rethink's strategy of planned staff growth and future acquisitions, the business needs flexible and agile services, like setting up a new employee quickly and at minimal cost.

Also, when Rethink wins a new client, it is easy to establish a new office close to the client or embed staff at the client's site; staff only need local connectivity and thin-client workstations to access corporate IT services, now in the cloud. Decommissioning an office, moving employees or redeploying hardware when someone leaves the company is fast, efficient and protects investment. The Ricoh solution means Rethink staff working on client accounts have the tools and resources they need to be more productive, faster.

Another benefit of the Ricoh managed service is the ability to rent applications by the month, instead of being saddled with the full product or a long-term contract, which adds to staff flexibility, productivity and agility.

Jacob says, "The business has around 10 percent of its staff embedded in client sites so the ability to provide an agile, effective and robust on-demand service to staff is critical. In effect, the Ricoh solution enables us to commoditise our IT services because we only pay for what we use. It means we can drive down costs, as well as make delivery of IT much more flexible."

Since rolling out the new solution, Jacob says, "The Ricoh managed service is highly managed, monitored and measured. We get regular service reviews, great insight into issues and resolutions, and regular discussions around innovation. The 24/7 support, alone, makes our IT services more available and it's significantly cut the administration and time we used to spend on IT."

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Microsoft Windows 7 & Office
- Desktop and networking hardware & infrastructure
- Hosted data centre services
- Ricoh Multifunction Products
- Equitrac

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Tim Jacob, Group Operations Director, Rethink Group

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