Case Study for an IT infrastructure

This specialist accountancy firm manages a caseload of some 2,000 businesses.

Business Profile

The organisation's infrastructure consists of three key sites in Wiltshire, Leicestershire and Ayrshire, a small office-based team abroad and a team of home-based accountants and regional managers.

Network Infrastructure Design Summary
Ancom collaborated to design a new Wide Area Network:

Core Requirements - Implementation of Wide Area Network Infrastructure

Prior to the system-wide restructure, they were operating three independent Local Area Networks and a slow and unreliable link for the small office based abroad. Home-based users were operating independently from the organisation's core infrastructure. The first stage was to incorporate a Wide Area Network to provide access to a new bespoke SQL database intended to replace multiple Access databases, enable centralised control of e-mail through Exchange and improve Internet facilities. Core to the overall project was the need to simplify IT management, improve security, reliability and resilience.

Ancom installed a successful pilot, to assist in designing a suitable network infrastructure. This process involved a number of meetings with our Network team and SQL database developer to design an environment suitable for meeting the current IT demands but also to provide for future developments. The project was complicated by the use of home workers in remote locations. These important considerations had to be taken into account:

* Performance and resilience for operating the new SQL database, which had integral links to other Microsoft applications including Word, Excel and Outlook

* Ease of management for deploying further updates to the new SQL database

* Total cost of ownership of implementing the wide area network

* Additional hardware and connectivity requirements, which had implications beyond the database development

The Result

The resulting system comprised a new SQL server, an Exchange server and secure VPN Firewall routers installed at the Headquarters. Due to their high service level and low failure rate, Viatel SDSL circuits were chosen to connect each site to headquarters. Remote users were provided with a locked down VPN connection to headquarters' systems. Users at all sites were migrated for e-mail to the new Exchange system implemented. The improved Internet facilities and new database system was provided through the VPN live to the client, and by use of stored procedures the useable speed was exceptional.

Our solution addressed all of the firms' requirements, providing robust and fast distributed access to the new database and associated applications.

Since the initial redesign of the network infrastructure, Ancom have continued to work in partnership with these clients, and have recently implemented further Internet Security. This has enabled our clients to introduce controlled Internet access, reduced spam and virus detection and prevention provided at gateway level.