

SUCCESS STORY: BT WHOLESALE MARKETS

BUSINESS NEEDS

- Coping with rapid growth, improving IT support and user productivity, and solving inventory problems

SOLUTION

- LANDesk[®] Management Suite

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Improved service levels to more users without additional support staff
- Software updates take seconds, not hours, and are usually transparent to users
- Increased productivity
- Much-improved asset management
- Major savings on travelling time and costs
- Better customer experience



LANDesk[®] answers the call

When BT Wholesale Markets, having experienced a large growth in size, needed to support more IT users, increase productivity and control operational overheads, there was only one answer – LANDesk[®] Management Suite.

Growing pains

BT Wholesale Markets is the sales, service and marketing arm of BT Wholesale. BT Wholesale provides comprehensive network services within the UK to more than 500 communication companies, network operators and service providers, including other BT businesses: BT Retail, BT Ignite, and BT Openworld. The sales and marketing organisation has experienced strong growth over the past few years resulting in a need to improve the management of the growing IT infrastructure. Many of the issues have been addressed by the adoption of LANDesk Management Suite.

Dave Baker, Build Manager for BT Wholesale Markets, is responsible for software installation and control on 1,200 desktops and 1,300 laptops at 10 major, and several smaller sites scattered throughout the UK. Two years ago the IT team needed a solution to reduce the cost of supporting multiple sites; the cost of travel or providing dedicated support to each site would be unsustainable.

In addition, a large supply of spare machines had to be kept at each site to enable users to continue working until an engineer arrived. This added to the problems because keeping an up-to-date inventory was labour intensive and difficult to guarantee.

Help was at hand

After qualifying the needs for remote control, faster software distribution, and improved inventory management, BT Wholesale Markets initially surveyed the available Helpdesk applications. At this stage the capabilities of LANDesk[®] Management Suite became apparent.

Dave Baker explains: "LANDesk Management Suite came as part of one of the help desk packages we considered. We talked to other users who were all impressed by its flexibility and performance; then we saw a demo and were convinced it was just what we needed. In fact, LANDesk Management Suite was the major factor in our decision to implement the new solution."



Personal service

Eighty percent of desktop faults are now being solved quickly, efficiently and remotely by the LANDesk Software solution. When a user calls with a problem, LANDesk Management Suite allows the support team to take over the user's PC. If users are doing something wrong, they go through the correct process together, which boosts user confidence. Errors not caused by users – for example, missing applications – can also be fixed remotely with LANDesk Management Suite.

Dave Baker describes this as “having an engineer sitting next to you without the wait.” More importantly, LANDesk Management Suite has improved response times and quality of service to a rapidly expanding number of users – without any additional support staff.

Assured updates

Before LANDesk Management Suite, BT Wholesale Markets had two ways to install software updates. Either an engineer travelled to each site and loaded them on every system while the users sat and watched – or the updates were distributed via email. Email was more cost effective, but there was never any guarantee that the users had actually processed the updates, nor if they were working correctly. Now all software can be installed remotely, which not only saves travel overheads but also ensures that all users' desktops are kept up to date.

Dave Baker cites one example of just how much time (and therefore money) LANDesk Management Suite has saved recently. An upgrade to a core application was sent to 150 users one Sunday so that it would be available early on Monday morning – most users didn't even know this had happened. With email, every user would have had to download the file, install it, and then reboot. This could have taken about 10 minutes per user – an astonishing 1,500 minutes or 25 hours of non-productive time. As an additional bonus, there were only three queries about the upgrade, whereas previously there could have been up to one hundred.

A real asset

Not only has LANDesk® Management Suite reduced the need to keep a large spares inventory, it has also made it very easy to keep track of exactly what is installed on each machine. As Dave Baker explains, this has brought two major benefits: “We now have much

more accurate and timely information about how many machines we have, exactly what software is loaded on each one, how much disk space it has, and useful information about the installed estate.

“For example, if we want to roll out a major new application that requires a lot of disk space, we can check the inventory and recommend any necessary hardware upgrades/changes before we send out the software. And if you know exactly what's on every system, you know how the applications will interact and plan accordingly, which results in a more stable platform.”

All software is now installed centrally, which brings other advantages. The fact that users cannot add unauthorised applications saves disk space and improves security.

Network efficiency

Multicasting has now introduced even more time savings. This feature allows the support team to distribute software to one machine on each site instead of each individual PC. That machine then distributes the software to all local PCs, so reducing the bandwidth requirements on both the local and wide area networks.

“Multicasting significantly reduces software distribution times,” says Dave Baker. “On a site with 40 PCs, for example, transmission is now 20 times faster.”

As a result, the support team can often distribute updates during the day, instead of overnight, which is helpful for urgent ‘quick fixes’. And, since more of the division's laptop users are on the network during the day, fewer follow-ups are needed after each transmission for users who were not connected.

“The impact on the network is dramatically reduced by multicasting,” Dave Baker comments. “It's also very easy for us to manage – we don't need to set up dedicated clients because LANDesk Management Suite is intelligent enough to select suitable clients without our intervention.

“Software distribution is now dictated by users' requirements, not by bandwidth, and it's much more efficient.”

“A tremendous asset to our organisation”

This is how Dave Baker sums up LANDesk Management Suite.

Not surprisingly, his final word is positive: “LANDesk Management Suite is a powerful tool, I couldn't manage the business without it.”



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