

Case Study

Customer:

Pixology Ltd (subsidiary of PNI Digital Media Inc)

Industry Sector:

Digital Media

Solution:

IT Outsourcing



In the frame...

For thousands of UK companies, information technology has become key to the running of the business.

Although not a 'core' function, many would certainly be unable to operate as effectively - if at all - if IT services were taken away.

Expert technology support is a welcome relief to many, enabling them to concentrate on their core activities. Additionally, for technology companies, IT is very much at the heart of their operations. Business critical, IT does not just help them run effectively, it is part of their raison d'être. Such a key business element, many find it hard to 'ask for IT help' as giving control of systems infrastructure to an IT specialist can be a bitter pill to swallow. However, for those who do, the rewards can be sweet.

Pixology has built the software and systems that help substitute the 100-year old film infrastructure with the new digital infrastructure. It is focused exclusively on the digital photographic market and has two specific product lines; an end-to-end Digital Imaging Connectivity solution that enables consumers to easily print, organise and share their digital pictures at home, via the internet or through instore kiosks - and a software tool that automatically eliminates red-eye, one of the key problems in digital photography.

In a sector growing rapidly with the increased use of digital photography, Pixology has become a victim of its own success. The digital photographic expert's core offering centres around its 'NetPrints' server-based infrastructure, which enables digital printing and photo finishing both in-store and via the internet. With a customer-base made up of consumers, retailers and manufacturers, many have come to rely on the capabilities of Pixology and having grown significantly over recent years, the company was increasingly aware of the importance of a strong IT infrastructure to ensure the levels of speed and reliability that customers demand.

For Pixology, the option of upgrading its existing IT system was superseded by the decision to outsource its UK and indeed global IT requirements - a choice that will end up benefiting the company both short and long-term.



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Mark Riley, IT Manager - Pixology Ltd



Throughout this important outsourcing exercise, we have been pleased by the fact that the cost of outsourcing our entire server requirements to a managed service provider as well as the first twelve months fees, is far less than we would have needed to pay just to upgrade our existing lines.



Mark Riley, IT Manager - Pixology Ltd

For further information

Contact Paul Sparkes:

T: 07764 305714

paul.sparkes@pcmsgroup.com

PCMS

The PCMS Group plc
PCMS House, Torwood Close
Westwood Business Park
Coventry CV4 8HX
T: +44 (0)24 7669 4455
F: +44 (0)24 7642 1390
mail@pcmsgroup.com
www.pcmsgroup.com

Having built the software and systems that help replace the 100- year old film industry, it is vital for Pixology to have a robust IT infrastructure in place so that it can focus on delivering digital photographic solutions to its growing customer base. Working in partnership with PCMS, Pixology has chosen the managed services provider to take on the role of server host to help develop infrastructure resilience.

“Since our specialism isn’t IT managed services, ensuring that our chosen outsourced provider totally understood our requirements, to achieve a solution to suit our specific needs, was paramount,” said Pixology IT manager, Mark Riley, one of the key decision makers in opting to outsource the hosting of its servers.

“As digital photography becomes increasingly mainstream and technologically advanced, the size of the files we need to distribute has become larger. With Pixology-operated kiosks situated in large retail outlets such as Jessops and Duane Reade (US Drug Store Chain) and web-based services offered through Nikon, John Lewis and Dixons, service failure could prove disastrous. Our data centre was formerly located at our UK headquarters in Guildford and we were at a point where it was prohibitively costly to run high speed data links. A local internet registry directly connected to the internet backbone, PCMS’ data centre has immediately provided us with increased levels of service and potential for cost benefits,” he adds.

Furthermore, since the volume and size of data is only ever going to increase and technology advance, moving to PCMS’s data centre Pixology avoids the need to replace the entire line or upgrade to accommodate business increase.

“To prevent the potential problem of restrictive line size, moving its servers to one of our data centres means the ‘pipeline’ is set at the optimum size for Pixology. Should the requirements increase, a simple upgrade in bandwidth level is all that is needed. With significantly reduced timescales for service set up and exponential cost savings the benefits are obvious for Pixology,” said Richard Smith, managing director of PCMS.

Optimum bandwidth is not the only feature that PCMS was able to offer as a result of the re-location of Pixology’s servers. Managing operations for the UK and the US, all its software needed to be hosted in a central location and one that was ‘safe’ and resilient.

Smith explains: “Our data centres provide industry leading resilience in the form of air conditioning, fire detection and protection, physical access control and multiple power feeds with generator back up. The core of our extensive range of managed services is to support the hosting and management requirements for business critical systems, such as those of Pixology. Indeed, management of network security and data back ups is also a critical part of Pixology’s requirement outside of hosting the servers and tier one internet connectivity - particularly as the company operates on a global scale.”

PCMS’s ability to provide a wide range of services depending on customer requirements supports the growth of service requirements and enables operation in support of a customer as best fits their needs today and in the future.

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“Our initial decision to source to a managed service provider was based predominantly on ensuring existing and potential clients, both in the UK and overseas, continue to be provided with a resilient solution to their digital imaging requirements - in terms of connectivity and software as well as bandwidth. We have achieved all of this as well as a positive impact on the balance sheet. It has also introduced us to a new partner. We are thrilled with the relationship and a relationship is what it is. We don’t see PCMS as a supplier, rather a managed services partner. With great account management, we had painless implementation with minimal disruption to our own staff, systems and customers,” concludes Riley.