SYNTAX
integration

Case Study
Syntax*One* IT support & outsourcing

Simon & Schuster – Developing a strategic IT outsourcing partnership

SIMON & SCHUSTER

Customer profile

Simon & Schuster UK, Ltd. (Simon & Schuster) is a global leader in the field of general interest publishing and media. The company is one of the fastest-growing publishers in Britain and their products are distributed throughout the world. The company has enjoyed long-term significant success with a number of well-known and respected authors, and their UK imprints include Simon & Schuster, Pocket Books, Simon & Schuster Childrens', Simon & Schuster Audio and Martin Books. Their UK operation is located at offices in London and Cambridge.

Situation

Simon & Schuster had previously outsourced IT support through a resource-based contract and was looking for a more pro-active, strategic and structured approach to managing IT systems and supporting users. Additionally, the company was poised to undertake a significant investment in their IT infrastructure in order to benefit from functional enhancements to Microsoft operating systems and messaging technology.

Syntax Integration (Syntax) approached Simon & Schuster with a business proposal for cost-effective and efficient IT outsourcing service, Syntax*One*. This combines the implementation of robust and optimised Microsoft infrastructure with controlled processes for management and administration, providing an opportunity to free up IT resources to assist the delivery of end-user support.

How Syntax helped

The first stage was an on-site analysis of the existing IT environment to understand what technology was in place at Simon & Schuster and how it was being utilised. This analysis also included looking at the business requirements for IT, and how support services could be delivered in a more effective manner. The result of the analysis was a series of recommendations on how to ensure a successful transition to a more measurable and efficient service model.

One of the first changes Syntax recommended was updating the IT environment along with changing some of the key infrastructure technologies. Tim Pyle, IT Business Manager, Simon & Schuster UK, explained: "We had budgeted for investment in our server infrastructure as we were running systems that were coming to the end of the manufacturer's support. Syntax recommended that we moved to a Windows 2003 environment for file and print services and Exchange 2003 for messaging, with one of the main benefits being that the network would be easier to manage and more reliable".

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With the new infrastructure in place, the next stage was transitioning to a Service Level Agreement based approach to IT server management. Menio Cokalis, Head of Services, Syntax, comments: "Server management and administration is carried out by the Syntax ServiceDesk and on-site resources. The management is controlled by a Syntax*One* appliance which we installed at the Simon & Schuster site. This appliance invokes a secure connection to our ServiceDesk, and monitors the server health together with collecting event logs and alerts. We automate much of the day-to-day administration such as patching and security updates and with our ServiceDesk remotely managing the servers, we free up valuable on-site resources who can then concentrate on helping the IT users at Simon & Schuster."

Tim Pyle stated that: "The combination of implementing a robust, efficient and reliable infrastructure together with the regular maintenance and administration through the Syntax*One* management service has improved the reliability and availability of our core IT systems".

In parallel with the managed server support, Syntax provides Simon & Schuster with regular on-site resources to assist in solving day-to-day end user support queries and to help in the deployment of new technology where appropriate.

Tim Pyle adds: "We prefer to have on-site support resources that can help our IT users solve problems quickly and efficiently at their desk, and currently Syntax provide a ServiceDesk engineer each working day".

A further benefit of the Syntax*One* model is that IT performance can be measured more effectively. Each customer has a tailored Service Level Agreement (SLA) together with web based access to the Syntax Incident Manager (SIM) system. SIM provides the customer with "at a glance" status of all IT systems, plus detailed information on all logged calls and activities. Tim Pyle further explained: "Syntax*One* is provided under an SLA, so it is very easy to measure how well IT is being delivered as a service to the business. Through access to SIM, we have excellent visibility of how well Syntax is performing, and whether the required response times to the business are being met. This high level of control means that we can focus on delivering a strategy that can align IT systems better to the demands of the business."

Key business benefits

- **A robust and reliable IT infrastructure**

- **Access to experts for server management and administration**

- **On-site resources to assist IT users**

- **Measurable IT support performance through the Service Level Agreement approach**

- **Visibility of support through the Syntax Incident Manager system**

For more information, please contact Syntax Integration Ltd on 020 7307 5000 or email marketing@syntax.co.uk

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