

About Bright Giant

Bright Giant was established in 2007 and is a young and innovative digital agency and production company, specialising in online campaigns. With customers ranging from Hoover to The United Nations and McAfee, Bright Giant generates cost-effective marketing campaigns targeted at their business and consumer customers. Providing a mixture of video advertising including viral and TV along with a range of digital marketing services, Bright Giant offers a range of specialities to reach the target market with maximum impact.

Struggling with business email

As a small digital agency, it is essential for Bright Giant to have IT solutions that are robust, secure, reliable and which have a minimal administrative impact on the business. They rely heavily on the availability of their email, which is needed to effectively run the business. They regularly have to send emails with large attachments of 500 MB a day, which was putting a huge pressure on the system and would often lead to outages. With a small team of employees, none of which are specialists in IT or managing an email system, they found that they were spending increasing amounts of time trying to rectify problems instead of focusing on their core business objective of serving their customers.

Lee Walker, Client Services Director says: "We previously outsourced our IT requirements to an external contractor, but were suffering email outages at least once a week. On



average this would take half a day to rectify, so we would all have to down tools and weren't able to work on our clients' campaigns. As most of our work is done over the network, this was hugely detrimental to our business. We do not have the time to deal with outages; email must be 100% reliable all the time otherwise our business, and our customers' businesses, may suffer. We began considering ways to ensure that the technology we use would we meet all our customers' needs."

Initially Lee was considering a new email server with the latest versions of Microsoft Exchange and Outlook. However, it very quickly became apparent that the drain on managing this system in-house was going to be an issue, as well as the up-front cost of hardware and software.

Choosing between on-premise IT or a managed service

Lee was close to making a decision to upgrade their email server, which would have cost around £3,000, when he became aware of the managed service from Star that provided everything he needed for a low monthly fee with no up-front costs for hardware and software. £3,000 is a large capital investment for any small business to make which has a big impact on cash flow. Star Business Email was therefore evaluated as an alternative option to upgrading the existing on-premise email solution.

Lee continues, "Star Business Email gives us everything we need from Microsoft Exchange and Outlook 2007 but without the hassle and cost of having to do everything ourselves. This was a key driver for us in helping to decide whether we should have our own email solution on-premise or have it delivered to us as a service by Star. We knew immediately that we didn't have a chance of matching their service levels and keeping the costs down if we chose to follow the traditional path of in-house IT. This was also a decision that was supported by the business owners who had absolutely no reservations about choosing a managed service to deliver our business email."

Bright Giant then evaluated the service and found that they liked the 'pay-as-you-go' way of using the service. This means they will only ever pay for the number of email seats they are using, giving them the financial flexibility and

predictability required to plan budgets and future needs. The technology proved to be cost effective and offered a level of performance that was vital to the day-to-day running of the business and unlikely to ever be matched in-house.

Keeping the business operational and flexible

For Bright Giant, cost was a key factor when selecting a new email solution. As the business is only in the second year of trading and in a particularly difficult economy, they were looking for ways to streamline the business, which would not affect efficiency but would keep expenditure low. With the fixed cost model from Star, Lee knows exactly how much they will be spending each month, and is able to quickly and easily increase or decrease the amount of users in alignment with the needs of the business. This makes planning for the future easier and the cash they had in the bank that would have been spent on a new server is still available for other important investments should Lee need it.

Lee explains how easy it was to change over to a managed service: "The deployment of the new email solution from our old Exchange server was simple and painless. Star provided constant support and minimal time was invested from us. The solution is easy to use and very reliable. We do not have the capabilities required to migrate to a new solution ourselves or deal with the day-to-day management issues which may arise. I used to think that every business had the problem of a service outage once a week, but since using Star Business Email we have not suffered from any downtime at all. The solution is always available and gives us greater functionality and availability than we had with our previous on-premise system. I think you can safely say I'm a convert to the delivery of IT as a managed service."

Better email security and instant business continuity

Lee was keen not to choose just any email solution but was convinced that Star Business Email was the right choice because included in the standard monthly price was the industry leading system for anti-spam and anti-virus. "It seems to me that Star pretty much thought of every angle to make their solution the most complete and compelling. I don't need to worry about security or backing up our emails because everything is included in the price."

"One of the biggest benefits is that we now have instant business continuity as a result of using this managed service, something we could never have afforded if we had gone with an on-premise solution. We can now access our business emails anytime we want to and from any location; all I need is Internet access and I can respond to our customers immediately. For us to try and replicate in-house the service that Star delivers to us would have cost us significantly

more than the initial £3,000 investment on a new email server. The value we get from Star's email service is massive and that's without taking into consideration SharePoint."

Access centralised documents whenever, wherever

Another powerful benefit that Bright Giant has gained from outsourcing their email to Star is the ability to access Windows SharePoint Document Management. As a digital agency, Bright Giant works on Mac OS systems to create their customers' content, yet the staff had endless problems in uploading and sharing files. Furthermore they also discovered that their system was being infected by viruses which affected file downloads and amendments.

Lee says, "We have got the most value from Windows SharePoint, and it has become a critical component in our everyday business. We are now able to access all our documents from a central location and we no longer need to send large file attachments internally. The quicker that we can access real-time company data, amend and share our documents, the more efficient we become. Like most businesses looking to outsource a key IT function, we were of course wary at first about moving to a managed service, but being able to seamlessly access our company data from anywhere in the world, without interruption, is a constant plus."

Supporting expansion and keeping competitive

Lee concludes: "We are looking to rapidly expand the company within the next couple of years and, as a result, we will be looking to increase our technological capabilities. Before selecting Star as our managed service provider, we had been looking at Mac based solutions, which were extremely cost prohibitive as it required us to purchase and maintain expensive hardware. However, with Star's solution there is minimal maintenance for maximum efficiency. We are now future-proofed as Star will always make sure we are on the latest version of Exchange, helping us to compete with our larger and more established counterparts."



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