

PDSA

Reliable and fast infrastructure to improve communications

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About PDSA

PDSA is Britain's leading veterinary charity. Every year, the charity provides more than one million free treatments to the sick and injured pets of people in need, equivalent to more than 4,500 free treatments every working day.

The charity was founded in 1917 and today boasts 46 PDSA PetAid hospitals, employing more than 400 veterinary surgeons and nurses. PDSA also works with a further 307 private practices, known as PDSA PetAid practices, to extend its free 'PetAid' service to smaller and more rural communities.

PDSA relies entirely on public support to maintain its PetAid services and without the generosity of pet lovers, its valuable work could not continue. To find out more about PDSA visit, <http://www.pdsa.org.uk>

Understanding the Issues

Like all charities, PDSA is always mindful of achieving value for money. The charity is continually seeking to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency is maintained, not only in the delivery of the high veterinary standards for which it is renowned, but also in all its support activities. To that end PDSA wanted to improve communications throughout the charity and make Head Office IT resources available to all remote sites. High-speed data links were planned, but installing leased line connections was prohibitively expensive. The charity required a broadband solution from a provider with a reputation for great customer service, reliability, and who offered value for money.

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Graham Parker, IT Manager , PDSA

Integrating the Technology

PDSA was attracted by Star's track record of customer satisfaction. “Star had a good reputation for customer service and competitively priced products,” says Graham Parker, IT Manager at PDSA. Initially, Star provided PDSA with a secure high-speed leased-line internet connection. Then Star supplied the broadband infrastructure for the links between Head Office and PetAid Hospitals. “Star was very responsive in overcoming any difficulties” continues Graham, “ensuring the tight project timetable of more than 40 installations nationally, was completed on schedule.”

PDSA also use Star's anti-virus solution, powered by MessageLabs, as a further level of protection, keeping the charity's systems free from rogue emails.

Realising the Benefits

PDSA is delighted with the new opportunities it has created by rolling out the secure broadband solution. “We have opened up a world of online resources for our staff,” Graham says. “Staff are delighted with the speed with which they receive emails and this has greatly enhanced internal communications. We have improved our IT support service, too. Now IT staff at Head Office can connect online to a user's PC to resolve a problem, be it in Aberdeen or Plymouth, rather than asking the user to courier the PC to us. This saves us both time and money but most importantly, improves client service. We can also remotely back-up systems between key large sites.”

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PDSA is impressed with the robustness, security and value for money of the Star solution. "Delivery lived up to expectation and thanks to Star, we now enjoy near perfect uptime over a public infrastructure," Graham says. "And we have better security. Our running costs have remained the same, but our service has dramatically improved. We can now offer more services to our users without increasing the number of IT staff."

Graham regards the cost of Star's anti-virus service , powered by MessageLabs, as "some of the best IT money" PDSA spends each year. "It has done a super job for us and we would recommend it to anyone. Since taking the service, not a single email virus has breached our network perimeter," he adds. PDSA has also taken Star's Image Control and anti-spam solutions, also powered by MessageLabs. "Some of our generic addresses were receiving large quantities of unpleasant material. Now the problem is virtually eliminated," Graham remarks.

Looking to the Future

"We couldn't have carried out our multi-site deployment without Star," says Graham. The Star team helped PDSA resolve technical problems and their proactive approach meant that rollout was swift and smooth. Now the charity has a reliable, fast infrastructure as the foundation for further developments. "We have reaped the early benefits and the potential is virtually unlimited," Graham concludes.

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