CASE STUDY

FUTURE-PROOF IT NETWORK FOR ONE OF IRELAND'S MOST SUCCESSFUL AGRI BUSINESSES

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BUSINESS I.T. SOLUTIONS

Client Overview

Codd Mushrooms have been growing the finest quality mushrooms from their farm in Tullow, Co. Carlow since 1989.

Starting from a small shed with two employees, they have grown into a modern, purpose-built mushroom production and packing facility, employing 250 people, and are still growing. They are now the largest supplier of mushrooms into the Irish Market – packing more than half of all mushrooms sold in Ireland – and supply all of the major retailers and the food service sector.

As this growth continues, they are striving for their Tullow operation to be one of the most innovative and environmentally friendly mushroom production facilities in Europe.

CHALLENGES

This growth has naturally brought with it challenges – one of which is that the company's IT infrastructure had come under strain. The company was at risk of outgrowing the network's capabilities – a network that had been designed for a smaller operation, conceived during the early stages of production in Carlow. The network had become a limiting factor.

BITS carried out an in-depth analysis of the network requirements needed for the company both now and for the future. The need identified was for a new network solution that was future proofed – providing a more robust infrastructure for current needs and an ability to cater for future growth.

Codd Mushrooms are now in production 24/7 and the old network could not support that.

THE SOLUTION

BITS proposed a completely new network that would be more stable and which would also support 24/7/365 production. The BITS solution would also allow the new network to be rolled out without production being affected and ensure that there was redundancy in terms of the network equipment in use, i.e., in the event of a device going offline there was a failover device in line that would allow for seamless switching to maintain uptime for production.

BITS worked with internet service providers to get dedicated broadband services to the site and, once the designed network was agreed, the solution was implemented. This involved a complete move of the network's centralised communications room to a new location and the re-routing of network infrastructure to this new, central location – all the while en-suring little to no production downtime.

During this transition from the old to the new there were effectively 2 networks running simultaneously while all primary services were progressively migrated over to the new network.

This new network included fibre optic cabling between the different buildings at the facility. This ensured a high speed connection between the different physical junctions on the network. The cabling solution also provided redundancy to ensure that all buildings will be able to stay connected to the network in the event of a failure.

Each of the (many) growing rooms within the facility require the use of a tablet to allow the mushroom-pickers to input data. To facilitate this, a comprehensive wireless network solution was implemented. This solution, using Ubiquiti hardware, is geared for a demanding outdoor environment where there are extremes of heat and moisture.

Finally, the changes being implemented at this time, particularly the dedicated internet services, allowed for the implementation of two valued additional features—firstly a Hosted Email solution (using Microsoft Office 365) and, secondly, a Voice over IP or VoIP phone solution in a hybrid configuration. In this hybrid configuration the VoIP solution was integrated into a traditional telephone system. This now facilitates both internet and traditional voice services.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Increased Network Stability
- Excellent Network Performance
- Faster Broadband Speeds
- Efficient Hosted Email Exchange Solution
- Reduced Phone Costs through use of VoIP
- Network is now Future-Proofed

THE RESULTS

- Network Design & Implementation
- Redundancy/Failover Solution
- Wireless Network Solution
- Fibre Cabling & Cat 6 Cabling
- Server Hardware
- Firewall Router
- Network Switches & Routers
- Hosted Email (Office 365)
- Phone Solution Incorporating VOIP

THE END RESULT

The results of the investment have been noticeable.

- The network is far more stable and is incurring less downtime.
- Faster broadband speeds have been achieved throughout the network.
- There is an efficient new Hosted Email Solution in place.
- Phone costs have been reduced due to the incorporation of VoIP.

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