



The Newly Reformed Cheviot Asset Management Enlists oncore IT to Provide IT Infrastructure, Support and Disaster Recovery Plan

Cheviot Re-launches and Relocates

Cheviot Asset Management, a 20-year old investment management firm, was relaunched in June 2006 with new management and a new team of professional advisers, on a mission to provide investment management with the very best level of service in Britain for high net worth individuals, charities and trusts. The new team to reform the company consisted of an eighty-strong group of Investment Managers and support staff, led by Michael Kerr-Dineen, the former chief executive of Laing & Cruickshank. The new Cheviot Asset Management is chaired by the former chairman of Royal Bank of Scotland, Sir George Mathewson.

Moving eighty people into a new office and transporting an extra twenty people from the old Cheviot Asset Management office in a very specific timeframe was a major logistical challenge. The new office based on Long Acre in Covent Garden was a 'greenfield' site, with no prior IT and communications infrastructure to support a business. Cheviot Asset Management decided to outsource the entire IT project to oncore IT, as a result of previous successes with the IT managed services company. With the key prerequisite of resilience and uptime, oncore IT was tasked to carry out the entire implementation, including highly resilient Internet connections and switching, creating the core server and SAN storage infrastructure, liaison and consultancy for all bespoke financial technologies and finally providing new desktop PCs for every member of staff.

Simon Pigott, IT Manager of Cheviot commented:

"Because oncore IT put the right infrastructure and solutions in place from the start of the project, our IT systems are robust, reliable and highly resilient. With this approach they will rarely fail and even if they do, we know that we can still access our data, allowing us to concentrate on the business without having to worry about the technology. The proactive way in which oncore IT functions has also led to the future-proofing of our infrastructure, ready to handle the growth of our business."

The Requirements

Simon Pigott, IT Manager of Cheviot, commented: "We needed a highly reliable and resilient underlying IT infrastructure to support our systems on an ongoing basis, scalable with the growth of our business. From previous experience with the professional and efficient services of oncore IT, we knew we could rely on them to deliver on these requirements, and within the stipulated timeframe."

In order to fulfil the needs of Cheviot, oncore IT needed to implement a robust IT infrastructure that would maximise the uptime of the IT systems, provide scalability for growth, enable business continuity in the event of an office disaster and allow Cheviot to comply with the latest Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations for disaster recovery planning.

The Challenges

Martin Bacon, Head of Sales at oncore IT said: "We were faced with many challenges in the office relocation for Cheviot, the biggest of which was liaising with third parties to ensure a smooth and timely implementation. With no existing facilities at the new office, we had to work with providers in many

areas, including networking, communications, hardware, software, power and air conditioning and each task had a specific deadline for completion. With our detailed consultative approach to Cheviot's requirements, we were able to guarantee uptime by creating a fully resilient infrastructure on every level. This, coupled with a full 24x7 support contract, ensured that on day one of trading Cheviot had all of the necessary tools in place to concentrate on their business, removing the day to day headache of running their IT and allowing them to focus on what they do best."

oncore IT was given 72 days to complete the new office set-up. Apart from the initial office arrangement, Cheviot also needed an ongoing support service from oncore IT to include monitoring and fixing of the IT infrastructure, as well as data protection and security in the form of email anti spam and anti virus, online backup, disaster recovery, a failover service and managed firewalls. It also required holiday cover for the IT manager. Cheviot therefore entered into a three-year fixed fee managed service contract with oncore IT to ensure the business could continue functioning on a day-to-day basis, even in the event of systems breakdown.

The Implementation

As well as setting up the core IT infrastructure and office facilities for Cheviot, oncore IT also created a thin client service using a SSL VPN (Secure Socket Layer Virtual Private Network) with 2 factor authentication so that remote workers could access company files, emails and market data from third parties.

"It was essential that everyone had access to the company files and their emails from day one," continued Simon Pigott of Cheviot. "It was also important to plan ahead for future system failures or office disasters that would prevent access to this data. The oncore IT team was able to immediately address this point by providing us with a redundant set of servers, the ability to quickly access lost data through an online backup and disaster recovery service, and 24/7 monitoring and alerting so that a fault can be fixed before we even realise there's a problem."

oncore IT created a set of redundant servers for Cheviot, which would automatically be invoked in the event of a server failure. This included a failover File and Print Server, an Exchange Server and an Application Server to include SQL with a facility for a Blackberry application and other future applications.

For ongoing IT support for Cheviot, oncore IT implemented its PReSS System to provide Cheviot with monitoring, fault identification and alerting services 24/7, 365 days of the year from the oncore IT Network Operations Centre. The system automatically logs calls for any anomalies found on the system and is coupled with extremely strict Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

To protect company data and comply with FSA regulations, Cheviot opted for oncore IT's Online Backup solution (OLB), powered by Asigra software, which backs up all of Cheviot's data every night to oncore IT's data centre in London and, for added security, its offshore data centre in France. In the event of data loss, whether it is the entire company data or an individual file or email, the data can be retrieved via the WAN from any of the data centres. To minimise downtime in the event of a systems failure, oncore IT also provides Cheviot with its Disaster Recovery service, whereby replacement server hardware units (a Disaster Recovery System or DRS) - with all of Cheviot's data restored on to it - can be sent to the office, workplace recovery centre or even hosted at oncore IT's data centre. For compliance this system is tested once per annum and is available 24x7.

Full Disaster Recovery Service

More recently in June 2007, Cheviot came to oncore IT for a solution that would enable business to continue as usual in the event of a major disaster preventing access to the office, such as a fire, flood, or terrorist attack. Even though Cheviot would be able to recover its files and emails from the backup solution, where could the data be recovered to and how could remote workers access the company network? The newly implemented thin client system would only work if the thin client server at the Cheviot office could be accessed. In the event of a fire or flood, this wouldn't be possible.

oncore IT created a cost-effective disaster recovery plan that would make use of the thin client service it had already implemented. This involved oncore IT hosting a pre-configured redundant VPN appliance

ready for connection in the event of a disaster. All of the data from the Cheviot servers would be recovered from the oncore IT data centres to a DR (disaster recovery) unit at oncore IT, including the thin client server. Using the thin client service, remote users could connect to the oncore IT-hosted DR unit from any location via a VPN (SSL VPN) that uses two factor authentication technology for maximum security.

The Results

Simon Pigott of Cheviot concluded: "Because oncore IT put the right infrastructure and solutions in place from the very start of the relocation project, our IT systems are robust, reliable and highly resilient. With this approach they will rarely fail and even if they do, we know that we can still access our data, allowing us to concentrate on the business at hand without having to worry about the technology that everyone in business now relies on to function."

"The proactive way in which oncore IT works has also led to the future-proofing of our infrastructure, so we know that as the business expands, even rapidly, our IT systems can handle this and no changes will need to be made to the underlying infrastructure, saving us time and expense in the long run."

About oncore IT

oncore IT provides a 24/7, 365 days a year managed IT service for small and medium sized businesses, incorporating both hardware and software for a complete outsourced IT solution. oncore IT partners with best of breed vendors to provide an IT management service that only a large corporate would normally have access to. Services include: remote IS management; provision of all hardware equipment and software licenses; disaster recovery; remote (offsite and online) backup and recovery; desktop management and assistance; equipment hosting and replacement; monitoring and alerting; network access services; bandwidth management; firewall provisioning; and email filtering. For more information, please visit the company's website at www.oncore IT.com or call 08450 541122.