

Barristers, 29 Bedford Row, outsource entire disaster recovery and IT infrastructure support using annual fixed fee contract to simplify management

Project introduction

Despite the traditional 'quill and ink' image of barristers, 29 Bedford Row Chambers, took the decision to operate more like a commercial organisation and completely outsource its IT function.

Having renewed its 3 year agreement with Oncore IT in January 2007, it now has an all encompassing IT support agreement under a single, fixed annual fee which has greatly simplified dividing central charges to each barrister so as avoiding the previous situation where numerous IT suppliers provided various services some under contract and some invoicing ad hoc on a monthly basis.

A 29 Bedford Row spokesperson commented, "We are now in a paperless era where safety boxes storing important legal documents have been replaced by the need for protecting digital information. Managing highly sensitive legal cases means that in the event of an IT systems failure, we need to be able to retrieve case management data and related emails very quickly. Losing or having it stolen could signal the end of a case and a huge loss of reputation for us."

29 Bedford Row previously used a tape-based back up solution which was unreliable, and time consuming to manage as it involved a non-technical member of staff having to manually back up office data and organise for it to be physically transported from the office to offsite storage. As a result, back up procedures were haphazard and often not done, with data stored then taking days to retrieve as tapes had to be delivered back.

Oncore IT selected based on a track record of success

Having been a customer for the past 8 years, 29 Bedford Row was confident that Oncore IT was more than capable of undertaking the complex task of providing a total outsourced IT service comprising online data back up and supporting IT infrastructure.

David Ebsworth, Oncore IT's chief technology officer, said, "Chambers operate quite differently to most similar sized organisations as each barrister is effectively treated as an individual business within the practice. Providing a fixed price for IT support and services means it is much easier for the clerks to divide the cost of support between the various individuals."

A range of Oncore IT managed services provided

At the heart of its outsourced managed services, Oncore IT uses PReSS, a remote network monitoring system which provides continuous and proactive system monitoring, fault identification, alerting and resolution services 24/7/365. Nominated Bedford Row staff can also access the system to view all support activity undertaken.

Ebsworth says, "PReSS incorporates a full call logging and escalation process that ensures any IT problem detected is immediately logged and then constantly tracked throughout the system until it has been resolved by our NOC team in accordance with the service level agreement set with 29 Bedford Row."

In addition to the core PReSS system, Oncore IT also provides the chambers with a range of other key managed services, including Internet connectivity, anti spam and virus email filtering, new servers and Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft Office software. Oncore IT also supports Bedford Row's use of Meridian, a suite of applications for time recording, case management and billing requirements.

One of the most critical solutions provided is the online data back up service (OLB). Based upon Asigra's award-winning data protection software technology, newly created or amended data is backed up every night, and fully encrypted from the moment it leaves Bedford Row's network. This means data is much easier, quicker and safer to store and, if ever required, restore, with Oncore IT replicating information to its tier 4 datacentre in Amsterdam for resilience.

In addition to the OLB service, Oncore IT also provides the chambers with a full disaster recovery service, such that should a major catastrophe such as fire, flood or prolonged mains power failure occur, the DR plan will be invoked and a full restoration of the chambers' entire system will start onto transportable standby server equipment. Once complete, the servers can then be shipped to any location within the UK.

As part of this, Oncore IT performs a complete trial data restore at its own data centre on an annual basis which guarantees that should 29 Bedford Row suffer a real catastrophe or major IT systems failure, it has the proven ability to fully recover the systems and data within strict time scales.

Tangible results

Now fully upgraded and implemented, 29 Bedford Row boasts one of the most comprehensive and advanced IT systems within the chambers community. By outsourcing its entire IT requirement in this way, it has not only freed itself up from the day-to-day responsibility of trying to manage and support an increasingly complex network, but released key staff to concentrate on more productive and profitable activity.

Downtime can be disastrous, especially for mission-critical systems where every second offline costs a barrister time, money and potentially, clients. Having the security of the Oncore IT service means that this is now minimised, thereby contributing positively to the overall profitability of the business.

Barrister, Peter Duckworth comments on the benefits of Oncore IT's data backup and disaster recovery service: "We have to look after client confidentiality, so it is imperative that the data from my home and office PC is protected at all times. With substantial fees being billed every day, the Oncore IT service provides me with peace of mind that even if I lose information, it can be retrieved with minimum disruption to my work."

About 29 Bedford Row

29 Bedford Row is a recognised leader in the field of family law. With 53 barristers including 9 silks, it received a Band 1 rating in Chambers and Partners in 2011. Ten clerks support the legal team. For further information about 29 Bedford Row Chambers, please visit www.29bedfordrow.com, or call 020 7404 1044.

About Oncore IT

Oncore IT is a cloud Managed Service Provider with vast experience delivering and managing critical IT infrastructure for clients operating from state-of-the art tier 4 datacentres in the UK and Europe. One of only 10 tier 1 bandwidth providers in the world, clients get unparalleled connectivity, super fast system performance, unmatched reliability and total security.

Oncore IT offer a variety of hosting, co-location and cloud-based managed services all guaranteed by class-leading service level agreements and solutions looked after by professional, dedicated account managers and technical experts.

Oncore IT excels in designing, implementing, and managing scalable, high performance, low latency infrastructure so its works faultlessly, fully supporting line of business applications no matter what size of company or industry.

PCs, servers, firewalls, security, Internet connectivity, remote access, online data back up, anti spam, virus protection, email and office applications, along with business continuity, remote monitoring and 24/7/365 technical support – that's what we mean by infrastructure.

Oncore IT makes infrastructure work because that's what makes businesses work. That's why year after year, 95% of customers renew their contracts with us.

For more information, please visit the web at www.OncoreIT.com or call 08450 541122.