Havelock Europa looks to a connected, collaborative future with Time Technology

Havelock Europa PLC designs, manufactures and installs educational, healthcare and commercial interiors and point of sale (POS) merchandising displays. Its customers include large businesses, local authorities, construction companies, major retailers, financial institutions and hotel chains. In 2004 the company saw underlying pre-tax profit increase by 16 percent to £5million. As a successful company showing continued growth across multiple business units and divisions, Havelock faced the challenge of providing a messaging infrastructure that would support its workforce – office based and remote - well into the future. With around 70 mobile project managers, sales people and estimators, working remotely on a permanent basis, as well as an additional number who need to have access to the company’s email and core systems from whichever site they are at, Havelock needed to address its outdated Microsoft 5.5 messaging system.

Finding a knowledgeable guide
With support for this version coming to an end, the company decided to assess alternatives. As upgrading Exchange is relatively complex, Havelock felt justified in evaluating other messaging systems and exploring how to support improved remote access and collaborative working.

Having impressed Havelock with its experience of similar projects, Time Technology was brought in to help with this evaluation process. Time Technology recommended the benefits of moving to a Lotus Notes messaging system. “They not only showed us how a Lotus Notes based system could meet our current email needs but presented us with a clear roadmap showing how we could use it to build some of the things we are looking for in the future. Things like work group collaboration, document management, intranet content management and so on,” says Graeme Carruthers, Group IT Manager at Havelock. “We were considering moving to Linux-based servers as part of our overall strategy and we were pleased to find that Lotus Domino could run on any platform.”
Taking a phased approach

Time Technology’s consultants put together a structured plan for the implementation of the new infrastructure. This included an initial pilot phase before roll out to all Havelock sites. A dozen office-based and roaming users were set up with a straightforward Lotus-based messaging and calendaring solution. The pilot ran for a few months and during that time Havelock’s IT team benefited from skills transfer and on-the-job training from Time Technology.

With a successful pilot behind them, Havelock took the decision to install the infrastructure that Time Technology had worked with them to design. This consisted of a Windows 2000 architecture, which would be used to roll out a Lotus Notes/Domino 6 infrastructure at seven sites across the Havelock Group. Time Technology set up the servers and worked with Havelock to provide a model on which they could base the roll out to the rest of the sites. A four strong IT team from Havelock spent three months rolling out servers and clients throughout the Group. “Time Technology supported us through any technical issues that occurred during this roll out period - not just with the Lotus Notes environment but with Windows 2000, which was also new to us. Thanks to Time Technology’s help it all went to plan and we rolled out on time and within budget,” says Graeme Carruthers. Having undergone technical and ‘train the trainer’ user training from Time Technology, the team was able to handle the internal user training without further help.

Out of the 350 users of Havelock’s messaging system, only a handful had any real issues with the change over to a Notes environment. According to Graeme Carruthers: “These people were using some of the more specialised options within Microsoft Outlook. Once they got used to all of the additional functionality within the Notes/Domino environment, the objections disappeared.”

A fruitful partnership

Time Technology worked closely with the IT team at Havelock to ensure the success of the project. “To have people with knowledge and expertise of this type of project on board from the start was hugely beneficial,” says Graeme Carruthers. “We never had a problem that they couldn’t help us with and knowledge transfer during the pilot phase helped us ramp up the skills of the internal team.”

Once the new Domino infrastructure was in place and proving itself at Havelock, Time Technology increased Havelock’s return on investment by developing a Domino-based web content management system. This devolves the creation and management of intranet content to the content owners. The system has allowed Havelock to radically revamp its Intranet, improving the accuracy and timeliness of the content.

Havelock is already starting to use its new infrastructure to deliver further applications and believes it now has strong IT foundations in place to meet its future growth.
Reaping the rewards

Havelock's Domino infrastructure has reduced the cost of the messaging service in many ways. Licence savings are the most obvious of these. Havelock's network bandwidth is more manageable due to Domino's superior replication technology.

The openness of the Domino technology delivers significant benefits in reducing total cost of ownership. There is no longer a dependency between the messaging system and the operating system, so Havelock will not have to change the messaging system just because the operating system is changing or becoming obsolete, or vice versa.

The remote work force can now pick up their email from any PC in any location and this facility, not previously available in Microsoft Exchange 5.5 has been very well received. The Domino infrastructure provides web-enabled databases and Havelock has allowed remote access to some information in order to support better team working and collaboration.

Graeme Carruthers feels that implementing a Lotus environment has also increased the security of Havelock's messaging system. “We now have a very robust solution in place and have confidence that our systems are secure from attack,” he explains.

A platform for growth

One of the most important benefits Havelock has gained from its move to a Lotus/Domino environment is that it has not just got a messaging client, it has an infrastructure it can build on into the future.

“We’ve not only got extra functionality from our investment, we’ve also got an infrastructure we know will support our growth and development,” says Graeme Carruthers. “Lotus Domino has a 10 year road map and Time Technology are helping us to leverage this.”

Havelock is in the early stages of examining how its new infrastructure could support an internal procurement system and a system for Human Resources. It will happily call on Time Technology's consulting and implementation services in the future.

“We couldn’t have achieved what we have without the support of the Time Technology team,” concludes Graeme Carruthers. “Their technical skills were excellent. On top of that they were very easy to work with and always on hand when we needed them. We will certainly work with them again.”

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