



Strategic partnership provides business critical infrastructure

BT Managed Data Centre Services help spread betting company grow and gain competitive advantage

Executive summary

Delta Index, the leading share trading company in Ireland, was looking for ways to differentiate in an increasingly competitive market. To achieve its strategic goals it had developed a core trading platform to better service its customers. But to activate the new platform it needed to move from renting the trading technology out of a hosted environment in the UK to a resilient and reliable infrastructure in Ireland. It needed an enterprise infrastructure and management capability that was too complex and expensive to run internally.

BT was the only company that could provide Delta Index with an appropriate business model that met its needs, a highly secure, fully managed hosted environment located in BT Ireland's Data Centre facility in Citywest Business Park, County Dublin. The contract includes enterprise computing and infrastructure management covering servers, databases, LAN, SAN, security and internet access, plus full technical support for a flat monthly fee.

"Moving to BT helped us stand out in a market where all our competitors were using rented platforms. Putting products on someone else's engine limits what you can bring to market and the types of spread bet you can sell," explained Michael O'Shea, Joint Managing Director, Delta Index. "BT gave us the freedom to be different."

BT won the contract through a combination of its global expertise and its ability to fulfil the partnership approach that Delta was looking for. "It is a strategic partnership and they have been very involved from the beginning," said O'Shea. "From design through to set-up, they were always at the end of the phone."

The entire backbone for Delta's route to market is now run and managed by BT. Going forward, O'Shea is confident that Delta now has the foundation for future growth. "BT has helped us put a platform in place that will support our expansion plans over the next 12-18 months. We have an aggressive growth strategy that we wouldn't be able to achieve as quickly or as efficiently without BT's support."

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Michael O'Shea,
Joint Managing Director
Delta Index

Case Study

Delta Index

The Business Case (continued)

Solution

When Delta Index started seven years ago it was the first spread betting company in Ireland. A tax-efficient alternative to traditional share investment, spread betting is based on predicting the outcomes of commodity trading contracts. Carried out online, with no other intermediary, it is an easy way for investors to trade the world financial markets with a low initial outlay. As a consequence, the sector has quickly grown with many new entrants.

Delta Index has retained its market leading position through innovative offerings. A principle part of this strategy has been the development of a strong product portfolio that runs across its custom-built trading platform, Xdeal. To support the new platform the company needed to change its backend infrastructure and move from a hosted environment in the UK, where it rented a trading platform, to a secure data centre that could supply a business critical service.

“We wanted a platform to offer multi-product, multi-currency financial services and be accessible across multiple countries. The original platform didn’t allow us to do what we wanted so we built our own,” explained Denise Hannigan, Head of IT, Delta Index.

This presented a number of challenges. Delta Index is a small firm with just 30 people, six of which make up the IT department. Hosting the new platform inhouse would have been prohibitively complex and expensive for a company of Delta’s size.

“We went through the process of looking at whether we could do it inhouse and decided it made more sense to pursue a strategic partnership. The decision was taken to find a third-party host that could provide a fully managed service to support the business and its core application,” said Michael O’Shea.

They went to tender and it came down to three players. “We chose BT for a number of reasons,” said Hannigan. “They made a real effort to understand the company and where we were going. We wanted their high-level expertise which we knew could help small companies grow but at the same time we knew we could trust them to provide low-level technology support on a 24x7 basis.”

Offices worldwide

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Benefits

BT was also chosen because of its ability to provide a highly secure, resilient and reliable infrastructure at its Citywest Data Centre in County Dublin. The facility offers 42,000 sq ft of fully managed Class A data centre space, supported by 24x7 onsite IT Service Operations personnel.

The IT services provided by the facility are underpinned by a management system that has achieved ISO/IEC 20000 certification – the first international standard for the management of an organisation’s IT infrastructure and related business services. This is aligned to the ITIL best practice framework which provides BT with a baseline for measuring service delivery processes and ensuring the highest standards.

“Our hosting and storage services are designed to improve the performance, reliability and security of our customer’s applications and critical business data,” said Stuart Hill, Senior Account Manager, BT. “We can design, install, configure and provide ongoing support of an entire ICT platform.”

For Delta, it was an environment that combined a Microsoft SQL database management system with HP servers and storage. Cisco and Nokia technology provide best-of-breed firewall security. Delta Index connect to the Data Centre over a secure VPN (Virtual Private Network), managed and monitored by BT.

Regulatory compliance was another important issue for Delta, particularly as it was the only spread better in Ireland to be MIFID (Markets in Financial Instruments Directive) compliant. The EU directive was drawn up to create a harmonised regulatory regime for investment services across the 30 member countries. BT’s Data Centre is also MIFID compliant. It is BT policy to ensure that its Data Centres operate to the highest regulatory standards in the country where they are located.

Michael O’Shea, Joint Managing Director, summed up the partnership benefits: “Our company is all about enabling intelligent trading and it is important that we are able to communicate our uniqueness throughout our customer service. You can’t really differentiate your services on a rented platform. BT has enabled us to host our own platform and achieve that goal.”

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