NRS HEALTHCARE DELIVERS BEST-IN-CLASS **SERVICE AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY**

THE CUSTOMER

NRS Healthcare is a market leading and award winning provider of products and services designed to support independent living. The organisation's comprehensive range includes daily living aids, mobility equipment, disability equipment and therapeutic resources.

Operating in healthcare for over 65 years, NRS Healthcare (previously known as Nottingham Rehab Supplies) brings to the industry unparalleled expertise in marketing and providing Daily Living Aids and Disability Aids for older people, disabled adults and children and their carers.

BUSINESS REQUIREMENT

NRS Healthcare's infrastructure needed to evolve radically to serve future needs. Storage issues and legacy servers hindered business growth and exploitation of SAP systems investments. Meanwhile, disaster recovery plans needed to cater for the 24x7 availability and service demands of NRS Healthcare's customers.

SOLUTION

NRS Healthcare worked closely with Annodata as a trusted partner to deploy the full range of Annodata's managed, professional and 24x7 support services. The approach put into place cutting edge VMware virtualisation capabilities across the business, along with a market leading Disaster Recovery solution. Today, site-level Disaster Recovery ensures 24x7 services, enhanced storage offers robust back-up facilities, and IT management is simpler and more effective. Around-the-clock support provides peace of mind.

"Constant availability of our services is critical to our NHS, Local Government and other customers. They ask specifically about Disaster Recovery and business continuity. Our choice of a trusted partner in providing our infrastructure is equally critical. We need excellence in Disaster Recovery, virtualisation and storage so we can assure our customers of availability and reliability."

ANDY SHEPHERD, IT DIRECTOR, NRS HEALTHCARE

annodata
wider choice, better advice
A KYOCERA GROUP COMPANY

www.annodata.co.uk

The business includes provision to the NHS, healthcare professionals and the public of a wide range of rehabilitation items, from wheelchairs and crutches to hospital beds for the home.

With 16 UK-based offices, including Northern Ireland, NRS Healthcare is successful in winning 3-5 year tenders with Health Trusts all over the UK, with a predominant focus on the south of the country. ECommerce plays an important role in serving both professional and public users.

THE CHALLENGE

Having run SAP systems for around 15 years and reaching the point where storage limitations threatened the future of those systems, NRS Healthcare was looking for a new and innovative storage solution that would enable further growth and change.

Added to that, driven by increasing customer requirements for around-the-clock service and availability, the organisation needed to establish excellence in Disaster Recovery. Top of the list was to ensure the most rapid times to restore IT systems and its data centre in the event of failure, in order to meet the 24x7 demands of its customer base.

THE SOLUTION

Based on a long term trusting partnership with Annodata, and following a full competitive tender, NRS Healthcare chose Annodata for a total infrastructure solution calling on the company's complete portfolio of managed services for design, deployment, installation, virtualisation, hosting and connectivity, along with around-the-clock support and Service Desk capabilities.

NRS Healthcare's business now runs on leading edge infrastructure and disaster recovery services fully provided by Annodata. The complete solution embraces everything from VMware clusters and site-to-site replication to storage replication, back-up to disc, failover between sites, and much more – all delivered by Annodata's Professional Service team and managed for NRS Healthcare on an ongoing basis.

TRUSTED PARTNER

Annodata has been a trusted partner of NRS Healthcare since 1998 having been engaged to deliver several infrastructure solutions, as well as to support the organisation's critical equipment. NRS Healthcare's IT Infrastructure Manager Steve Johnson cites the importance of a proven business relationship in the provision of such a broad scope of infrastructure services, particularly those embracing virtualisation, storage and disaster recovery.

"With most major projects, we go out to full tender to be sure of getting the best solution at the best price. We discussed the project with several providers giving the issues we faced and the direction we wanted to go in, and we requested innovative proposals for the solutions we needed to put into place.

"Helped by their knowledge of our business, and their outstanding technical expertise, Annodata came back with a robust and cost effective solution that we knew would meet our needs while reducing costs and driving efficiencies," he says.

"Our infrastructure solution not only builds on a strong and trusting partnership between NRS Healthcare and Annodata, it also reflects Annodata's expertise and their complete understanding of our demanding requirements as we aim to evolve and grow our business, providing the best and most reliable services to our customers."

IN-DEPTH ENGAGEMENT

Importantly, according to Steve Johnson, the engagement with Annodata demanded an in-depth look into NRS Healthcare's infrastructure requirements across the organisation, taking into account data usage, the existing environment, budgetary constraints and a lot more.

"We looked at different solutions from other organisations but it was proving difficult to find an affordable one that effectively leveraged our current environment and addressed our requirements for the future. Annodata has deep knowledge of our environment, the way we work and our business objectives, so they were able to propose a compelling virtualisation and Disaster Recovery solution."

He continues: "Only a true and trusted business partner is able to work closely on delivering critical infrastructure projects involving virtualisation and Disaster Recovery. Annodata has achieved this, from applying their Professional Services expertise to specifying hardware and software requirements, right through to deployment, establishing the entire infrastructure and then offering the ongoing support and service we need."

THE SOLUTION IN MORE DETAIL

One of NRS Healthcare's major requirements was to commission a leading Disaster Recovery environment to protect its critical business systems from long term service outages. In his role as IT Director at NRS Healthcare, Andy Shepherd believes choosing the right relationship is vital. "Technical expertise and a strong working relationship are crucial in forming a Disaster Recovery partnership to keep our business's IT systems up and running," he says.

"Constant availability of our services is critical to our NHS, Local Government and other customers," he says. "They ask specifically about Disaster Recovery and business continuity. Our choice of a trusted partner in providing our infrastructure is equally critical. We need excellence in Disaster Recovery, virtualisation and storage so we can assure our customers of availability and reliability. "

> "Our infrastructure solution not only builds on a strong and trusting partnership between NRS Healthcare and Annodata. It also reflects Annodata's expertise and their complete understanding of our demanding requirements as we aim to evolve and grow our business, providing the best and most reliable services to our customers."
>
> **STEVE JOHNSON,** IT INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, NRS HEALTHCARE

WHY ANNODATA? AT-A-GLANCE

- **Trust** – NRS Healthcare has worked closely with Annodata for many years as a trusted business partner.

- **Understanding of requirements** – NRS Healthcare needed a partner to understand the current environment and leverage existing investments to create a complete solution for Disaster Recovery, virtualisation and storage.

- **Technical expertise** – According to NRS Healthcare's Infrastructure Manager Steve Johnson "This is a big plus point for Annodata. I work with Annodata Professionals whose skillsets are excellent."

- **Support and ongoing managed services** – "If we ever need answers quickly, we can always depend on Annodata," says Steve Johnson, "on top of which we have on hand the back-up and support services we need".

- **Cost effectiveness** – The Annodata solution provides value for money, utilising elements of the existing environment to the full.

The existing multi-site server and storage environment was supplied and deployed by Annodata. Annodata's task now was to re-configure the environment to support disaster recovery and business continuity in the event of temporary or permanent loss of NRS Healthcare's primary data centre at its Head Office in Leicestershire. As the recommended way forward, virtualisation of the environment helped to address storage concerns about relying on older systems and servers.

"We implemented a new storage system and on top of that virtualised and migrated our SAP systems," says Steve Johnson. "We then had the opportunity to leverage our new infrastructure, to gain further cost and efficiency benefits for the business. With Annodata's expertise we were able to start virtualising a lot of our servers within a very short timeframe, including the critical servers in our data centre. We went from 5 racks worth of kit down to 2 racks, saving a lot of space and energy."

He continues: "Added to that we now run a more efficient IT infrastructure that's easier to manage, and as part of our VMware migration we found we had more time and that it was much easier to provide additional services to the business."

On the Disaster Recovery side, Annodata's recommended approach embraced the organisation's HP4000s. As an innovative early adopter of these systems, NRS Healthcare wanted to exploit them fully, while expanding them to its data centre and embracing VMware.

"Annodata played a very big part in this approach," according to Steve Johnson. "We basically went to Annodata with the problem and as experts Annodata identified the best solution. After some financial analysis and technical assessments Annodata concluded that using our HP4000s would be the optimal approach as it leveraged the big investments we'd made. We relied on Annodata for the best solution available: they knew our environment, understood our business objective and budget, and proposed the best approach for our business."

SERVING CUSTOMERS 24x7

So how is the solution enabling NRS Healthcare to improve its services? Back to IT Director Andy Shepherd: "Our business works with the NHS, for example. We provide equipment to patients who come out of hospital. It may simply be crutches for six weeks. Or it may be specialised equipment for patients with terminal illnesses who want to be at home.

"We provide all the equipment for however long it's needed for and then take it back and refurbish it. If our systems are down we still have to provide uninterrupted service and our costs and effort go up. We have indirect customers in life-ending scenarios waiting in hospital for discharge, and we need to help them to return home with the equipment they need. So our systems must be up and running 24x7, and if ever there's an issue, they must recover rapidly. That's the solution we have from Annodata, along with around-the-clock, around-the-year support."

The solution in place is critical to NRS Healthcare's capabilities which play an integral part in the organisation's business. Split between an ECommerce website focused on the end user, trade and professional customer – and the Community Equipment business (Contracts with Local Authorities and NHS - including their Occupational Therapists) – eCommerce is an essential and growing service. An online portal for the Community Equipment Service allows Occupational Therapists to quickly place orders for equipment and track their progress.

"There are tens of thousands of trade, professional and general community customers who use our online services," says Andy Shepherd. "This is of immense importance to our business. We deal with all of these customers on a daily basis and must constantly develop our software to meet their various requirements. We rely on Annodata to support and keep us abreast of all the hardware and infrastructure that sits behind this, and it is all essential to the onward services that we provide to our customers."

"Only a true and trusted business partner is able to work closely on delivering critical infrastructure projects involving virtualisation and Disaster Recovery. Annodata has achieved this, from applying Professional Services expertise to specifying hardware and software requirements, right through to deploying HP servers, establishing the entire infrastructure and then offering the ongoing support and service we need."

STEVE JOHNSON, IT INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, NRS HEALTHCARE

THE COMPLETE SOLUTION: NRS HEALTHCARE

NRS Healthcare's infrastructure solution draws on the full range of Annodata's portfolio and capabilities, including:

- Expertise as a Leading Technology Services and Partner and HP Gold Preferred Partners in Enterprise Storage and Computing Systems.

- Fully managed services, hosting and connectivity, business continuity, remote monitoring and more. These are delivering streamlined IT support and procurement administration, reduced systems downtime, increased productivity and reduced operating and support costs.

- Annodata 24x7 Service Desk.

- Dedicated Service Delivery Manager.

- Multi-vendor hardware and software support service.

- Annodata renewals portal, enabling ongoing online management of all contracts, renewals and amendments.

- Centralised Call Placement with one UK contact number for all support calls.

- Dedicated Annodata Account Management team to manage and administer contracts and provide consistent contact across all Annodata Services - Technology, Professional Services, Managed & Support Services. This reduces administration associated with managing multiple service contracts, placing and escalating service calls and managing contract changes.

THE BENEFITS

- Site-level Disaster Recovery ensuring business continuity and the ability to deliver services to customers on a 24x7 basis.

- Enhanced storage and computer resources, with more robust back-up facilities.

- Significant space and energy savings, greater system and business efficiencies and simpler more effective IT management.

- Around-the-clock support of fully managed storage and computer resources, with more robust back-up facilities.

Annodata is one of the UK's longest standing providers of Managed Services, covering Document Management, Unified Communications and IT.

For more information on how Annodata can help you become a more efficient enterprise, please contact:
marketing@annodata.co.uk or Tel: 01923 333 333

annodata
wider choice, better advice
A KYOCERA GROUP COMPANY

www.annodata.co.uk