

Attenda

Always On Managed Services

bmi case study

bmi invests in key areas to help ensure that its business is always available.

Unsurprisingly, bmi does not see itself as a technology management company – its main role is to sell seats and to provide airline services to customers. bmi is the second largest airline at London Heathrow and operates services in the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

bmi had reached a decision some time ago to leave technology management to specialist companies. As a result, most of bmi's services are hosted externally and most of its IT is selectively outsourced.

To support key business applications upon which its success depends, bmi selected Attenda as its hosting provider. bmi wanted to work with an organisation that was good at managing the performance of application environments and could work with bmi to help to improve the way their applications operate. Disaster recovery was another important factor in the selection of a hosting partner.



certainty / confidence / agility



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Peter Federico,
Group IT Director, bmi

Selecting the right outsourcing partnership

As an integral part of the hosting provider selection process, bmi also considered how it wanted to buy the hosting service and it was at this point that the flexible capacity pricing idea was conceived. Peter Federico, bmi's Group IT Director explains why: “This gave us the opportunity to move from a fixed price model to a variable pricing model, so that as the business grew, we would pay more and if it were to shrink, we would pay less. As a company, we have been trying to move more and more of our contracts onto a variable priced basis.”

Attenda was sufficiently confident in its own ability to deliver ‘IT certainty’ that it was happy to effectively share in some of bmi's business risk by agreeing to this pricing model.

As Federico points out, “However, most important, we wanted a company that was willing to work with us on the basis of giving us incremental increases in capacity as our business grew or where we needed to handle temporary ‘peaks’, such as those following promotional activities Attenda was willing and able to do this.” He continues, “For example, one of the peaks in our business occurs around the launch of a new schedule – this is when customers get access to the new seat availability. When this is published we can get a huge peak in activity.”

Attenda's firm commitment to, and demonstrable experience in, ITIL processes, was a strong factor in deciding to work with Attenda. bmi has adopted ITIL processes internally so they were keen to select a supplier with expertise in this area. Finally, the ‘knowledge factor’ was another element in bmi's decision, and they were impressed by the depth and breadth of Attenda's knowledge.

Implementing the Attenda solution

Since the initial contract in 2004, bmi's infrastructure has continued to evolve: in many areas it has grown and in some it has shrunk. The use of new technologies, including virtualisation and shared SANs has been incorporated to improve business agility, provide a disaster recovery capability and reduce total cost of ownership. Moving forward, bmi has plans to move a significant proportion of the infrastructure delivered by Attenda onto a VMware cloud computing platform.

As Peter Federico explains, “Moving to a cloud computing model will play a key role in our ongoing drive towards reducing the TCO of our IT infrastructure and increasing our operational agility.” He continues, “Using cloud computing, provided to bmi by Attenda, based upon VMware's technology, will give us the ability to scale our computing capacity on-demand, in order to meet spikes in activity. Clearly cloud computing is core to our day-to-day operations.”

Realising the business benefits

bmi views Attenda very much as a key business partner rather than just a supplier. As Peter Federico says, “They are an excellent company, they work in a very cooperative manner with us, and we are very pleased with their approach and performance.”

So how is the variable pricing working in practice? According to Peter Federico, “The pricing works very well. It provides us with the ability to flex our infrastructure and pay for computing resource on an ‘as required’ basis, to match the needs of the business, supporting increased activity from marketing campaigns, the roll out of new applications and testing of upgrades.”

Federico continues, “We are delighted that we have a model that reflects the dynamic changing characteristics of the airline industry and one that has moved us away from a capital expenditure centric model.” Moreover, the contract with Attenda enables the bmi IT team to meet and exceed business service levels, within an agreed commercial contract, without the requirement to constantly renegotiate contracts.

The partnership with Attenda is one that is getting stronger as both companies move forward. Since bmi is very impressed with Attenda and what they have achieved to date, the company is including them in evaluations for other types of services too. “We have every confidence in Attenda as a service provider,” says Peter Federico, who is emphatic about the importance of the relationship.

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