



LEADING IN THE LEGAL SECTOR WITH BIG DATA

berg Solicitors take a clever approach to data and IT delivery by partnering with legal hosting specialists, C24.

Background

As a multi-service law firm operating for over 30 years from their base in Manchester, berg's servers and applications were starting to run slowly as more demands were being placed on the IT systems. An ageing network also meant that there was a degree of device sprawl that placed evermore constraints on the connectivity and server performance.

This created frustration amongst staff and business users who were dissatisfied with lagging applications and connectivity issues. Overall, the business wasn't operating as efficiently as it could be, despite the best efforts of the IT team to make the existing systems perform.

At an application reporting level, berg's existing Practice Management software included a degree of reporting capability, but functionality was limited and could not be easily integrated with other application and financial data. This meant that information was siloed and when it was collated together into management reports, it often spanned over 20 pages in length; making it difficult for staff across the entire organisation to get a high level view of business performance.





Working with C24

berg first engaged with C24 after attending a talk by Hurst, a nationwide accountancy firm, where C24 were presenting on disaster recovery (DR) technology trends and considerations. This led to the berg team engaging C24 on a simple disaster recovery project which then resulted in C24 deploying a site-wide infrastructure refresh, a new DR solution and a bespoke business analytics tool.

The relationship between berg and C24 has been built on trust – with both parties working closely together to find new solutions that are tailored to berg’s unique business characteristics. As explained by berg’s Finance Director, Ian Brownhill, “C24 give you that feeling of confidence in their expertise and ability to sort out any issue”.

Objectives

berg had a number of objectives when it came to improving their IT environment, namely:

- Implement a robust business continuity solution that ensured adequate disaster recovery systems were in place to deal with any downtime or outages. This was because many of berg’s clients would refuse to instruct a law firm if there wasn’t a suitable DR policy in place to allow for operations to continue under any circumstance.
- Deliver a fast, responsive and flexible IT platform that could cope with intensive new applications and provide staff with the speed and agility that they expected of business IT.
- Deploy a data solution that can unify information across the entire organisation in a simple, holistic and easy to digest manner, without the high costs normally associated with enterprise legal software. In the words of Ian Brownhill, Finance Director at berg, “We just wanted an analytics solution that would be able to give us the information we wanted, in the way we wanted it.”





The Solution

In order to achieve these objectives, C24 embarked on a refresh of berg's central IT systems, updating the existing infrastructure with enterprise servers and storage. Core networking switches were also installed to help with the slow connectivity issues, and C24 partnered with networking specialists to install and reconfigure the networking estate.

The new infrastructure solution also included a DR solution. This now forms part of berg's wider business continuity policy.

Additionally, C24 worked closely with the IT and Finance team at berg to deploy BI24, C24's business analytics and data intelligence tool, across the law firm. The new business intelligence solution involved C24's technical consultants integrating berg's different data feeds and creating bespoke reports designed to berg's exact requirements.

Outcomes

Since the new infrastructure and reporting solution has been in place, berg has realised a number of business outcomes. The network that underpins the firm's applications and IT systems is now fast and responsive, meaning that applications being used by business users are now more reliable. The IT infrastructure has been upgraded to the latest technology with a dedicated disaster recovery solution in place which is tested regularly to satisfy berg's client requirements.

On the data and reporting side, there are a range of benefits which have directly impacted on day to day business operations:

- Data across the organisation is now integrated into one intuitive analytics tool to enable easier decision making.
- Personal reports tailored to berg's organisation by C24's data analytics specialists mean that information is readily available in the format, style and arrangement that berg require.



- The solution is a cost-effective way to harness the data resident in the Practice Management System (PMS) without having to purchase expensive PMS reporting or change the PMS altogether to a new provider.
- The scope of data that the staff across the firm now review has broadened as it has become easier to extract, share and digest information.
- The key management and financial information is now collated onto one page, reduced considerably from the previous 20 page report. This means that data is more accessible and is easier for all stakeholders to get a high level view of business operations.
- A wider range of staff, from Managing Partner through to individual solicitors, are now accessing business information due to the clear and coherent reporting style.
- Without the BI24 solution from C24, berg would have been forced to change Practice Management Systems to access the range of reporting features they now utilise, which would have been a costly and disruptive exercise.

Future for berg

With their new infrastructure and reporting solution in place, berg are now looking at ways to maximise their investment in C24's data analytics tool by extending its use across the organisation to other departments such as business development and marketing.

Additionally, the finance team at berg want to automate some of the reporting capabilities to enable reports to be run, formatted and delivered to set folders with correct access rights and permission levels. This will make reporting and data analysis an integrated function across the business; providing much needed information for all types of business situations and decisions.

The next step berg is now considering in order to stay ahead of the market and deliver more value back to customers, is to provide clients with access to their own information and reporting so that individuals can log in to a secure berg portal and see reporting associated with their own case for on-demand and real-time information sharing.