



As a small company providing Independent Financial Advice, GKS Pensions and Investments Limited, offer a wide range of financial services to businesses and private individuals.

Managing Director Gary Sissman is keen to embrace the use of technology to further his business, moving the company to become leaders in the field of technological application to financial planning. His ultimate aim is to run an almost paper-free office with clients being able to access their own daily updated portfolios online.

The Brief

The business has grown significantly over the last year and subsequently so has the requirement for a more robust IT system with access for remote users and additional measures for business continuity and disaster recovery.

The Approach

As Microsoft Small Business Specialists we were perfectly placed to develop and cost an ideal solution to meet their requirements. The main concern was to complete the work with as little disruption and downtime as possible. Developing a strong working relationship with GKS and effective planning helped us to achieve this.

The Solution

Hicel provided new and upgraded servers for the GKS offices, expanding the current Small Business Server 2003 domain with an additional high powered Windows 2003 Server running SQL Server 2000. Once the server was configured and joined to the domain we migrated the applications database and company documents to the new server, this helped to reduce the load of the original server and took advantage of the faster processing power and data transfer rates the new server provided.

We then built a Windows 2003 Terminal Server to allow remote users easy access to the GKS domain. This combined with the use of Remote Web Workplace, a feature unique to Windows Small Business Server, enables users to retrieve emails, connect to their own PCs and the Terminal Server via an straightforward user interface which can be accessed from almost any PC with an internet connection.

Next Hicel provided and configured new client workstations for all staff enabling a standardized setup throughout the office which not only assists us with providing support, but provides the perfect environment for staff to swap desks and PCs when work loads and staff absence require it.

For GKS the protection of their data is of the highest priority, Hicel were able to provide two complimentary backup solutions, including the implementation of a new online backup platform, which backs up and stores data securely to remote servers over the internet. Hicel also worked with GKS to create a Disaster Recovery strategy, by building a Disaster Recovery server configured with all the key applications required by GKS to run their business. This is kept off site and, as part of our ongoing support package, we continue to update, maintain and test the server on a regular basis ensuring GKS can get their business up and running within hours should disaster strike.

The implementation and securing of a wireless router completed the network upgrade allowing laptop users to move and work freely around the office environment.

The Future

As one of our Unit customers we are able to continue to maintain and support the whole IT infrastructure through proactive monitoring, a telephone support line, remote desktop connection and on-site visits. This gives GKS confidence and peace of mind in their IT setup and allows them to focus on the continued growth and expansion of their business.