

Is our current IT provision fit to support doubling our size?

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The Mpac Group builds machinery to facilitate effective and efficient packaging of a range of items from contact lenses to biscuits, and as a result create automation ecosystems to develop and optimise the manufacturing process.

Case study

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With sites and teams across the globe, and growing rapidly while remaining lean and profitable, the audit committee for the group approached Waterstons with one simple question: "Is our current IT provision fit to support doubling our size?"

In short, yes. But there were some areas for improvement...

How we did it

We spent around five months taking our time to get to know the business and its people through site visits and relaxed, informal interviews with key team members across all department.

We wanted to get to know them, how they operated and what went on behind the scenes but openly and honestly, so these discussions helped us to understand the real feelings experienced.

At the same time, our technical consultants investigated the hardware, servers and networks, speaking with the relevant teams to gain a thorough understanding of the systems in place.

What we found

The technology works; the main infrastructure, network and servers are in a perfect position to scale. There are things to work on, one important but not costly and the others beneficial, but ultimately the IT is ready.

The main applications are suitable and appropriate with well-considered follow-up projects being initiated to enhance other enterprise systems.

The people are passionate, enthusiastic and supportive of the business, but some of them are stretched, meaning that while the technology itself could scale, the business leadership may be challenged to do so.

Similarly, the IT team required additional capacity across technical knowledge and internal client relationship management to better serve Mpac as it grows.

What we recommended

When it comes to IT, there were small issues to resolve but otherwise carry on as it – the infrastructure was set up for success and scalability. There were elements to work on that could strengthen this, but they were not urgent and could be completed in the medium to long term.

To scale the IT, increased use of automation and additional skill development would be beneficial to make sure that the IT quality rises (but percentage overhead does not), while creating more time to improve the quality of service given.

In terms of the team structure, increasing senior level capacity was suggested (and several models given), meaning additional benefits would be delivered while keeping within current overhead levels.

An audit was also recommended to identify even slight overloading and where additional support is needed, not only to protect and manage effectiveness with the current team, but also any additional resource brought on board through recruitment or acquisition. This would also enable highly effective senior managers to deliver more strategic benefit as well as continued operational excellence.

After all, more businesses mean more people (and their quirks) moving to, then utilising, the IT infrastructure.

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