

Case study: LeasePlan

Interxion Dublin Data centre keeps LeasePlan motoring

LeasePlan Infrastructure Services (LPIS) based in Sandyford, Dublin, supports LeasePlan Corporation's operating units in 21 countries in Europe and employs 85 people.

LeasePlan Corporation is one of the largest fleet management companies in the world. Historically, the IT infrastructure that supported its European business resided in each individual country. This all changed in 2002 when it was decided to centralise the infrastructure in Dublin. LPIS was formed to undertake the consolidation programme and manage the centralised IT systems.

"We host LeasePlan's core IT infrastructure, so if you're leasing a car, completing a deal, invoicing and so on, it's done effectively through us," explains David Ryan, managing director of LPIS. "We also host and support 30 group-wide high-availability customer-facing applications, such as mileage logging, internet quotations, service reminders and change-to-winter-tyre prompts."

Ryan says the consolidation project had two main drivers – reducing costs and building a single delivery platform to help the group follow through on its globalisation plans.

"We have a very strong focus on IT as a platform to enable flexible, streamlined delivery," he explains. "One of the ways you do this is to centralise, so rather than having 21 sites, we have one big one in Ireland servicing Europe."

Choosing a partner

In simple terms, consolidating IT infrastructure into one location requires a state-of-the-art, highly available and scalable data centre. But rather than build and operate its own, LPIS decided to place its servers within a third-party facility owned and run by a specialist data centre operator – an arrangement known as co-location. It's a service that makes a lot of sense to companies with significant computing needs that don't want to get bogged down in managing technology, Ryan believes. "Building our own data centre was never on the cards. Why would you when there are subject-matter experts out there better positioned to do it?"

In order to be able to cope with an actual disaster and comply with local and European business continuity requirements LPIS selected two co-location sites, one of which at Park West, Dublin was built and operated since

The Bottom Line

"The benefit of Outsourcing core IT infrastructure to specialist data centre companies is now more apparent than ever. As many companies are faced with the need for 100% availability of their systems and infrastructure, LeasePlan demonstrates how partnering with a trusted data centre company like Interxion has benefited their business."

2001 by Interxion, a European data centre services provider.

"All potential suppliers were vetted for their financial stability. This vetting would ensure that there was no disruption in service," comments Ryan.

"But what really sold it for us was the experience of the people – they'd been there, done that, got the t-shirts," adds Ryan. "There were a lot of other people around town who'd built data centres but did not have the experience and expertise to actually undergo a platform build out and assist in a migration programme."

LPIS now houses all of its production, development and test equipment supporting IT requirements of LeasePlan Corporation in 21 countries at Interxion's site in Park West, in what is believed to be one of the largest IBM iSeries installations in Europe.

Ticking the boxes

To win the contract, Interxion first needed to be able to tick all the boxes on LPIS' list of stringent criteria. Chief among these was security. "As a leasing organisation LeasePlan Corporation has a banking licence and as such regulatory compliance, the standards of governance and security around that are very high," Ryan explains. "We are audited regularly so the physical and operational security is clearly very important for us. The security measures taken at the site mean we're never at risk."

Availability and scalability were also critical requirements. The growing popularity of the Internet has made it imperative that LeasePlan's services are available to its

customers around-the-clock. "Our business is very customer oriented. We operate on people-time not business-time so our systems have to be always available," stresses Ryan.

One of the company's most heavily used applications, for example, is an Internet quotation system that allows customers to spec up a car and then get a quote from LeasePlan. With LeasePlan's extensive EMEA footprint it is imperative that the on line services are available 24/7 in all time zones.

Another popular service is a fleet management application that allows drivers to enter their mileage. For example, more than 16,000 Swedish postal workers log their mileage directly into the LPIS system every month.

A question of scale

As the IT consolidation programme progressed LeasePlan continued to expand its business. Since LPIS first placed its servers with Interxion in 2002, the size of its IT footprint has steadily increased to reflect the new countries covered and the organic growth within LeasePlan. Here, Interxion's international reach and technical capability was a major point in its favour. If, for example, LPIS had a particular technical problem that required a customised solution, Interxion would be able to draw on the technical expertise from across 11 European countries.

Interxion was willing to be flexible too, and it readily acceded to LPIS's request to have a number of its technical personnel work within the Interxion data centre looking after the LeasePlan equipment there. In fact, some nine LPIS staff are based there at any time.

According to Tanya Duncan, managing director of Interxion, having LPIS technical personnel working within the data centre has helped forge an excellent working relationship between the two companies. "We are a very closely knit team," she says. "The level of confidence demonstrated by LPIS in Interxion and its services is something we are very proud of as a Service Provider. This relationship has been forged through a mutual understanding of both business and technical requirements. We look forward to delivering the continued quality of service that LPIS demand."

Overall, Ryan is more than happy with how his IT consolidation project has gone and the role that his outsourced data centre has played in that. "It's all been very smooth. The building and computing environment have always met the standards we expect."

About Interxion

Interxion is Europe's leading provider of carrier neutral data centre and managed services. With 20 data centres across Europe, it has the largest footprint and currently supports 1000 customers including enterprises, Systems Integrators, Internet Service Providers, hosting and telecommunications companies.

Contact Interxion

T + 800 4687 9466 (international toll free number)
T + 44 (0)20 7375 7070
F + 44 (0)20 7375 7059
E info@interxion.com