

OEN REAL LIFE

Increased efficiency at Knight Frank

Knight Frank improved performance and productivity across its 40 UK offices as well as enhancing data storage and disaster recovery strategies after installing new IP-based networking



Worldwide property specialist Knight Frank has a UK presence that extends to 40 offices and a suite of hub offices in London's Mayfair district which house the company's 1,500 UK-based employees. In order to keep pace with the fast moving executive property market and to provide a high standard of service, all consultants need to have access to the company's bespoke real-time applications. These allow them to retrieve information on residential markets, valuations and real estate management quickly.

The applications are managed centrally from each of Knight Frank's two data centres and were accessed by each regional office via a wide area network (WAN) connection. It was vital that this link provided a quick, reliable and consistent service; otherwise access times would have increased and compromised the customer experience.

In common with most companies over the last couple of years, Knight Frank experienced a rise in data volumes across its network – spurred on by an increasing reliance on bandwidth-hungry applications. Both factors pushed the existing network to its full capacity. It was in this context that Knight Frank took the strategic decision to replace its existing WAN with InPurple from SwitchIP – to link all the regional bureaux and to connect each one into the company's data centres.

Owen Williams, Head of IT at Knight Frank said "We selected InPurple as it was able to increase

Benefits realised

- > IP-based data network over 40 UK offices
- > High speed 2MB data link and an eight-fold increase in downstream bandwidth
- > Improved performance and productivity across the company
- > Improved data storage, supporting business continuity and disaster recovery strategies
- > Centrally managed secure network



bandwidth availability by a factor of eight – while still costing exactly the same amount as our existing network. InPurple also applied measurable, quality of service standards that could ensure predictable access at all times. This was essential if critical applications were to continue to operate in a fast and efficient manner."

Williams acknowledges that InPurple's centralised manageability and security features played an enormous part in the final decision – citing the fact that the solution requires only a single firewall to protect the entire wide area network and a sole PC to administer it. He clarifies: "By using one firewall across the whole network, InPurple reduces the number of access points at which unauthorised access could, potentially, take place – it also means that one person can take control of all security and general administration functions. This has the effect of centralising all procedures and applying them rigorously across the business."

Email and Storage over IP

InPurple now provides each regional office with a 2Mb broadband connection, which allows employees to confidently send and receive vital data without worrying about the speed at which it will arrive at its destination. It has also increased the responsiveness of networked

applications and enabled Knight Frank to abandon an array of disparate email systems – introducing instead a dedicated centralised email server.

"As a result of installing InPurple, we have commissioned a range of network-based projects that just couldn't be supported in the past. For example, it has enabled us to improve our data storage policies. This is because information from each site can be backed up to our data centres at a much faster rate – ensuring a watertight disaster recovery strategy is in place. Out of all the solutions we looked at, only InPurple was able to provide the upstream and downstream bandwidth required to make this possible.

"InPurple has helped us continue to meet our core business aim of providing outstanding real estate and business support services, as well as up-to-date national, regional and local intelligence on commercial and residential property markets. It has also ensured that our team are not let down in front of their clients because of slow functioning network connections – allowing them to provide a high quality customer experience and continuing Knight Frank's reputation as worldwide property professionals" concluded Williams.

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