



IT Counts

Conquest Wildman

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If you have any ideas as to what you would like to see in these newsletters, please do not hesitate to contact **Maria Alvarez**, *Business Dev. Manager*

We are very pleased to announce that Geoff Runnalls has joined us in the capacity of Technical Engineer. "We have ambitious plans for growth and improvements over the coming year and know that Geoff will play a key part in achieving those goals" said Rob Hammond, Technical Director.

We would like to offer any of our clients or potential clients the opportunity to come and view our premises. Please ring **Maria** on **01234 301133** to arrange a convenient time for you.

Now you can afford to buy new IT equipment or upgrade your system. Our sister company, **Gregory Wildman** offer advice on various leasing options. Please contact us for further details.

We will soon be offering a variety of IT training options. If you have specific requirements or want to know more, call us.

Give your business some TLC

This case study explores how outsourcing can be a valid option for SME's wanting to upgrade and install new IT solutions. Conquest Wildman Ltd, an SME itself, is a specialist outsourcing IT company.

Information technology is now a key tool for all businesses, whether a company uses basic PC applications or the internet. However, employing an IT specialist on a full-time basis can be expensive; this is where outsourcing is a valid alternative.

Choosing the right hardware and software for your business can be a time consuming process. However, it is vital to make the right choice when considerable amount of money are involved.

Conquest Computers initially specialised in the repair of equipment, until in 2001 when it merged with Gregory Wildman Limited, the software and systems arm of the Chartered Accountants – Gregory Wildman.

Since then, Conquest Wildman has become more focused on providing complete business solutions, as David Lewsley, Managing Partner of Gregory Wildman and FD of Conquest explains "We had to turn the service into something more encompassing for our clients, thus creating one port of call for all their IT and IT related needs. With Conquest and Gregory Wildman working closely together our clients have access to a wider range of services and expertise. We can provide them with the IT infrastructure to build their business, manage their accounts, supporting and maintaining both their accountancy and IT needs."

Since the relationship began, Conquest has now become a strong and trustworthy IT outsource focal point for many businesses. The fact that Conquest is an SME itself helps them to find the most suitable and best value solution for your needs.

"As a business, we have found that the simplest tools are often the best to use. Taking the time to discuss your needs in detail helps us to present user friendly solutions," says Rob Hammond, Technical Director of Conquest.

Paul Gyngell, Managing Director of Conquest adds "Outsourcing is a good option for companies as it provides a guaranteed service every day of the year, if required. We can provide services to a business from a few days a month to five days a week depending on what they require. We are very flexible."

Outsourcing IT and accountancy services also means that a business can always afford to have the most recent technology and knowledge at its fingertips. As Conquest and Gregory Wildman demonstrate, used sensibly, outsourcing IT and accountancy can be the perfect solution for many difficult growth, change and expansion problems. They have the knowledge and the know-how without the usual stress involved with business growth.

For a complimentary meeting ring us on 01234 301133.

IT Stories from the Web

A story from an IT company based in the US...

"Once we had a guy bring in two Polaroid pictures of screen shots of his computer. He claimed they were "before" and "after" shots and wanted us to diagnose his computer problems by looking at the pictures. They looked the same to us — but we kept them and posted them in the back area with a \$1000 dollar reward to anyone who could diagnose the problem that way!"

A story from an IT company in Peru...

"A former co-worker was called to solve a problem. The problem was that a customer called saying that his 23-inch workstation monitor screen was cracked.

The customer was a mining company in the Andes mountains, South America. Upon checking the manuals, they found the monitor's maximum operating altitude above sea level was lower than where the

mine was. My friend's supervisor was worried that the monitor might blow up in someone's face and create a major incident. They sent him right away a replacement. When he arrived, they took him to where the workstation was. He took a long look at it, then licked his fingers and wiped the screen. The monitor hadn't been cracked. It was just dirty!"

Computer failure can kill your business

It is a sad fact that hundreds of otherwise successful businesses fail every year simply because they lose information held electronically, but there are steps you can take to ensure that this does not happen to you.

Ten years ago most of us had not even heard of email and the internet, but it is already hard to imagine how we ever survived without them. Whereas e-commerce was until recently a word that we associated with big global businesses or with dot-coms, we are now all doing it.

Once we have had a bit of practice, information technology can be a liberating force, saving time and money and making it possible to improve our service to customers. It also brings new dangers, however, which can literally destroy your business. Unfortunately, most firms are leaving it to chance.

Most of us now depend on computers to communicate. They routinely also hold vital customer and financial information, and can be essential to keep track of suppliers, order new stock and support distribution. In manufacturing firms, they are increasingly helping to control production and monitor quality.

Your information is one of your most important assets, second only to your staff. In short, the electronic data you hold is often second only to your staff as your most important asset. It is also highly vulnerable. Most firms experience some kind of problem with their electronic data every year. Usually, these incidents are no more than a nuisance. Even so, the chances of something going catastrophically wrong with your data are far greater than, say, your offices burning down. We nearly all implement a range of costly fire prevention measures, as well as buying fire insurance. Yet very few companies take similar steps to protect their IT systems.

The sort of things that can and do cause firms to lose essential data include innocent employee error, sabotage by disgruntled staff, computer viruses (frequently imported via email), hard disk failure and computer hacking. In addition, you may be sued if one of your staff accidentally emails confidential information about a client to the wrong person or if an email contains defamatory comments. Websites face similar risks, especially if you depend on them to conduct business.

These threats are not just theoretical – they are happening here and now. KPMG has just released a 'Global Information Security Survey 2002' that puts the average direct loss suffered by an organisation at USD \$108,000. When you add in the opportunity cost of downtime and reduced employee productivity, not to mention the potential legal penalties and reputation damage, the effect can be catastrophic. And there is overwhelming evidence that the problems get worse every year.

So, what should you do to protect your company or organisation?

Three-quarters of businesses wrongly assume their insurance will cover them. Let's begin by looking at what you should not do. According to research by MORI for insurance providers Safeonline, the vast majority of people who run small or medium-sized companies are essentially hoping for the best. They are doing very little, if anything. Three quarters believe – wrongly - that their standard insurance policies will protect them from the consequences of digital failure.

Managing this risk has three stages: identifying the risk; reducing it as much as practical; and then transferring the remaining risk to an insurer.

If you do not have the necessary expertise in-house, please contact Conquest Wildman Ltd, who can advise you on how

to identify and then mitigate the dangers of digital failure. Simple precautions include installing systems that automatically provide electronic back-ups for your documents; staff training to minimise the dangers of importing viruses or accidentally wiping essential information; and the erection of 'firewalls' to keep out electronic intruders.

Once you have done what you can, you must then come to terms with the fact that complete digital security is no more possible than making your home 100% burglar-proof; that is where insurance comes in. It is a sad irony that the smaller companies are the least likely to purchase digital insurance, even though they are usually the most exposed.

A number of specialist insurers will provide this cover, which starts at a few hundred pounds. They will also provide free advice, because they have a vested interest in reducing the chances of a loss; indeed, most insist upon certain security measures before they issue a policy. It is important, however, to get the right protection that suits your business and your budget. You only want to pay for cover that you actually need.

Many insurance products place an emphasis on securing data retrieval in as short a time as possible, rather than pure financial compensation, because your first priority must be to get the business fully up and running again. Indeed, time is money in these situations, and the longer it takes the greater the chance of your firm experiencing permanent financial damage.

Whatever your needs, this subject is going to become a big business issue over the next decade. A bit of planning now could save you hours of heart-ache in the future.

Contact us to discuss your specific requirements on 01234 30 11 33