FUJITSU

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE

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John Watson, Senior IT Services Manager, Provident Financial

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation
Provident Financial

Contract signing date:
2002

Service/s delivered
Migration from Windows NT4.0 and Novell Netware 4 to Windows 2000 infrastructure.

Key metrics
By December 2003, 500 staff at headquarters will be using the new system and 800 will be using Windows Exchange 2000 email system.

Benefits
- 350 hours a year saved through a single vendor login
- Reduced cost of operating its infrastructure and system administration costs
- Reduction from 12 to 9 servers required, saving an estimated £45,000 on upgrade and management costs
- Seamless communication and information exchange
- Increased office productivity
- Improved service delivery to customers
- Resilient, future-proofed solution.

Customer's Challenge

Founded in Bradford in 1880 by Sir Joshua Waddilove, a Victorian philanthropist who sought to provide affordable credit to working class households, Provident Financial has since grown to become the UK's leading provider of home credit, serving over 1.6 million customers in the UK and Ireland alone. Following its recent acquisition of Yes Car Credit, it also offers a unique combination of affordable car finance to compliment its insurance offering.

In 2002 the company recognised that its corporate infrastructure, which was based on a mixed server environment of Windows NT 4.0 and Novell NetWare 4, had reached a critical point, with an ageing hardware platform and significant licensing issues.

Andrew Herd, Network Systems Manager, Provident Financial, explains, *"We had got to a point where our core systems were unsupported and unsupportable. Novell had withdrawn support for NetWare 4 and we could no longer procure additional licensing. We were also running out of physical storage capacity."*

Fujitsu's Solution

In putting together a business case to replace its hardware and migrate to a new operating system, Provident Financial chose Windows 2000 as its preferred platform because it offered complete compatibility with its existing Windows NT domains, so it would simplify password and data synchronisation, licensing and support.

Furthermore, Provident Financial had already implemented a new system based on Windows 2000, which is designed to improve field staff efficiency and provide better management information and customer detail. A replacement for the company's primary business system is also being developed for use on the Windows 2000 platform.

Provident Financial subsequently went out to tender, to find a company to help design and develop the new Windows 2000 infrastructure and, after an extensive evaluation of suppliers, chose Fujitsu.

John Watson, Senior IT Services Manager, Provident Financial, comments, *"Fujitsu demonstrated a clear understanding of what was required and its people were obviously knowledgeable and understood how the project should be structured, run and delivered."*

"There was a real clarity in Fujitsu's proposal," adds Andrew Herd. *"You could clearly see how we were going to get from A to Z based on their strategy. It gave you great confidence in their ability to deliver what was a major undertaking and we needed that confidence."*

The key deliverables for the project were the design and testing of the new architecture, knowledge transfer to Provident Financial's IT staff who had limited experience of Windows 2000, assistance in the implementation and migration, documentation and project management.

By December 2003, the 500 staff in Provident Financial's Headquarters office will be using the new system, with a further 800 benefiting from the new Windows Exchange 2000 e-mail system.

Andrew Herd says, *"In partnership with Fujitsu we have created an infrastructure that will be much easier to manage and provide much greater reliability. I doubt that we could have done it in the same timescales and with such a lack of incident without them."*

"Fujitsu provided a very professional service," confirms John Watson, *"and I don't think that we would have got a better solution from anyone else. It was as professional an experience of working with another organisation as I have ever come across. Based on this work, we will always see Fujitsu as a company that should be considered for future projects."*

Benefits to our Customer

The new Windows 2000 infrastructure will provide Provident Financial with a single, unified File and Print platform, which should enable it to:

- **Save 350 hours a year** in resolving user password synchronisation problems with a single vendor login
- **Reduce the cost of operating** its infrastructure, with estimated savings of £21,000 in licensing fees
- **Minimise system administration costs** with standardised support and increased system reliability
- **Reduce the number of servers required** from 12 to 9, saving an estimated £45,000 on upgrade and management costs as well as freeing up 80 square feet of valuable machine room space.

Andrew Herd adds, *"One of the key benefits for my team has been the lift in our knowledge and awareness of Windows 2000 gained from working with Fujitsu's extremely experienced engineers."*

In addition, the company will also benefit from:
- A **scaleable standard** Enterprise platform
- Seamless communication and information exchange
- **Increased office productivity**, through centralised data sharing and simplified information access
- A **resilient, future proofed** solution, using 'best of breed' technology that can be easily upgraded
- **Improved service delivery** to customers.

John Watson says, *"The new Windows 2000 platform developed by Fujitsu will reduce the cost of providing services to our business because it will be easier to manage the infrastructure and control the desktop. It also ties into our overall corporate IT strategy so we will reap even greater returns in the future as the solution is extended across other parts of the group and we can share common information, such as address books, and retire some of our older NT 4.0 domains."*

Our Approach

The NetWare migration project comprised of five distinct phases. Initially, a Project Definition Workshop was held to discuss and agree issues such as the high level strategy, how the project would be implemented and success factors. Fujitsu then produced the High Level Design, detailing how the new infrastructure would work and be consolidated into the existing IT architecture.

Following the development of the Low Level Design, Provident IT staff, with the assistance of Fujitsu, then built a Proof of Concept laboratory before finally producing a pilot system and a plan for the migration of data during the full implementation.

Andrew Herd says, *"The Proof of Concept system was developed jointly and was part of the knowledge transfer process as we were able to get practical hands-on experience of Windows 2000. As a result, the new infrastructure is the area of our corporate systems that we know most about and it's been a great success."*

Our Expertise

Having never worked with Fujitsu prior to the NetWare migration, Provident Financial was impressed by the range and depth of its people's skills and their commitment to the project's success.

Andrew Herd says, *"We wanted people who could fit seamlessly into our organisation, communicate freely and be very committed. Where we did have disagreements we worked through them professionally and I never felt that we got a solution that wasn't fair and just. I now feel that we have an organisation that we can call on who are not interested in selling us bells and whistles or the latest gadget, but want to meet our needs professionally."*

"Fujitsu picked the right people of the right calibre for the job," adds John Watson. *"Their technical and project management skills were very good. As a result the project ran very smoothly with very few anomalies. Based on my experience of other projects, this one has gone extremely well."*

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