



Amdahl IT Services Case study The Abbey National Milton Keynes Fibre Network

Amdahl IT Services is a strategic member of the Fujitsu Group, a leading provider of Internet-focused information technology solutions for the global marketplace. The company designs, builds, deploys, and supports integrated IT infrastructure solutions for the world's most demanding enterprises.

Abbey National plc operates through a range of Group companies both in the UK and overseas. It offers a range of financial services, including: banking, investment, insurance, mortgages and savings.

Profit before tax for the group for the first six months of 2002 was £697 million.

Aperture™ provides innovative visual workplace and IT asset management software and services via advanced workflow and visual technology to visually manage space, fixed and technology assets, as well as the entire change management asset lifecycle.

Introduction

The Abbey National Group, one of the UK's leading financial services provider, recently awarded a major contract to Amdahl IT services to implement a significant enhancement to the company's fibre optic network that links three locations in Milton Keynes.

This work is part of an ongoing relationship between the two companies, which started more than five years ago when Abbey National realised that ultra-high bandwidth connections between its locations was a priority – both for cost-effectiveness and heavy-traffic capacity.

Background

In 1996 Amdahl IT Services was contracted by Abbey National Group to manage, from design to implementation, its new Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) – this would be an engineering project linking three of Abbey National's locations, situated in the Milton Keynes area, with a fibre network. The cabling would ultimately form a triangle across the town, using 16 km of cabling to link the centres.

Amdahl® was chosen because of its wide experience garnered from similar projects – giving it a running start when dealing with the various problems involved in threading a fibre optic cable across a busy urban area. The Milton Keynes work offered many challenges – motorways, bridges, roundabouts and railways: all obstacles that had to be either circumvented, crossed or tunnelled-under.

In these situations, our experience was relied upon to ensure that the resultant solution was feasible, cost-effective, and sustainable on a long-term basis. Also, the Health and Safety aspects of working in such high-risk areas were a priority for the project, again, an area that Amdahl could draw upon examples of past 'best practice'.

The project also required Amdahl to oversee the installation of 16 km of cabling within the locations—linking 3,000 ports spread between the three locations. Connecting the buildings and main cable routes were a series of 14 patch panels.

“As a result of the instigation of the network, we saved a great deal on Parallel Sysplex IBM license fees, which in itself paid for the project over a couple of years.”

Guiding all areas of the project was 'resilience' – such a large network would be exposed to a variety of 'threats', such as traffic, road works, water, etc., all of which had to be planned for and negated. Amdahl managed the groundwork company that they had contracted to lay the cable – establishing protocols that would provide Abbey National with a lasting 16 km cable 'triangle' across Milton Keynes.

Following the successful completion of the project, Amdahl orchestrated and ran a number of training sessions for Abbey National to explain how the company could successfully unleash the full potential of the network. The success of the network and the training was immediately evident to Abbey National, who had been using externally managed services for their networking prior to the instigation of their own cable network. Increases in the company's communication costs were avoided as a direct result of the fibre network. Following the commissioning of the Metropolitan Area Network, Amdahl continued to support the infrastructure on an ongoing basis.

Gary Wass, Head of Group Technology Architecture for Abbey National, puts the benefits of the network to his company in context: "As a result of the instigation of the network, we saved a great deal on

Parallel Sysplex IBM license fees, which in itself paid for the project over a couple of years. It also gave us the type of resilience that CREST demanded, in that a Disaster Recovery site over 2km apart was necessary. We were also able to set up in-house business continuity procedures."

Benefits to Abbey National from Working with Amdahl

'Part of the team' is the way that Abbey National sums up the Amdahl contribution to the implementation of the Milton Keynes network and the subsequent upgrade and maintenance contracts. Amdahl has always prided itself on a commitment to the customer – from the original 'A customer problem is an Amdahl problem' mission statement when the company focused on S/390 manufacture and installation, to today's integrated service offerings that incorporate innovative working methodologies such as InfraCare™ and Adaptive Integration™.

As well as a cost-effective solution to its communication needs, and a significant reduction in related costs following the instigation of the network, Abbey National also acquired a business partner that could apply sound experience to its problems.

Additional Services

In Spring 2001, Abbey National awarded Amdahl IT Services the five year contract, for the maintenance of its fibre network in Milton Keynes.

It was felt by Abbey National that Amdahl were the people best placed to ensure uninterrupted communication over the system – their intimate knowledge of the network and a proven track record of maintenance and delivery ensured they won the tender. Within the contract, Amdahl provides Abbey National with ongoing consultancy support, each month.

The uses this time is put to are highly varied – some of it is devoted to assisting with the use of 'Aperture' – a cabling and dataroom mapping system that enables a company to accurately monitor its resources and make informed decisions on future developments. Amdahl also provides consultancy work on the future uses and developments of the

fibre cabling system – advising Abbey National on how to get the best out of its systems and ensure that any future work is compatible with the system and the ‘best solution’ for the network.

Amdahl also monitors outside influences on the network. Crossing the town three times, the cable is often an issue for town planners and developers. Amdahl works closely with the local councils to monitor any proposed development or repair work that may affect the fibre. Occasions have arisen in the past where Amdahl has worked alongside construction companies to ensure that building work didn’t damage the cable.

As part of the service-level agreement, Amdahl provides an ‘on site within four hours’ service for interruptions to the network. This response was most notably tested when a roadworks crew sliced through the cable in several places with a JCB, without causing any loss of service.

The system is monitored 24 hours a day using automatic sensors that test for degradation of quality from the cable and breaks within the network via tension monitoring equipment. These sensors are linked up to a ‘control centre’ that automatically alerts Amdahl should there be a problem.

Conclusion

In the Spring of 2002 Abbey National again turned to Amdahl for a solution to its growing data flow between the offices. This rise, due to the company’s increasing business activities, would have eventually led to a ‘full-capacity’ situation for the network and the bank was keen to pre-empt this with an early upgrade. The requirement was for an increase in the number of fibre cables running the 16 km between the three buildings – but without causing any disruption to the company’s critical data systems.

"Having been involved in the original project to provide fibre services to the various locations, we were well prepared to tackle this project," states Henry Jerwood, Data Centre Infrastructure Services Manager for Amdahl IT Services. "Our knowledge of the existing network, together with our attention to detail and our excellent working relationship with Abbey National’s staff, were key to our completion of this project within time and budget."

Gary Wass, Head of Group Technology Architecture for Abbey National, felt the upgrade went extremely well: "The inclusion into the network of the new fibre went extremely smoothly, without any interruption to the existing service," he states. "We were faced with the need for more capacity between our locations, and the original system installed by Amdahl was flexible and accessible enough to achieve this. This is a tribute both to the existing network implementation and to the planning and execution of the upgrade programme."

“We were faced with the need for more capacity between our locations, and the original system installed by Amdahl was flexible and accessible enough to achieve this.”



a Fujitsu company

Headquarters

Fujitsu Technology Solutions, Inc.
1250 East Arques Avenue
P.O. Box 3470
Sunnyvale, CA 94085-3470
United States of America

Tel: (877) 213 6674
Sales: (877) 905 3644
Fax: (408) 746 6595
Internet: www.fts.fujitsu.com

United States of America

Fujitsu Technology Solutions, Inc.
41 locations nationwide — for the one
nearest you: (800) 538-8460

Canada

Amdahl Canada Limited
Toronto, Ontario: (800) 387-1566
Montreal: (800) 361-8613
Ottawa: (800) 865-0007
Quebec City: (418) 653-8858

Europe

Amdahl Information Technology Services

Austria

Wien +43-1 240 27 6300

Belgium

Amdahl Belgium SA/NV
"Woluwe Garden" Woluwedal 26 - B.4
B - 1932 Sint-Stevens-Woluwe
Tel: +32-2 715 0300

France

Paris +33-1 44 10 22 00

Germany

Berlin +49-30 568 8100
Sulzbach/TS +49-6196 584-3
Hamburg +49-40 278 300
Molfsee +49-4347 7139 0
Muenchen +49-89 490 580
Muenster +49-251 237 3320
Nuernberg +49-911 981 760
Sindelfingen +49-7031 61040

Ireland

Dublin +353-1 813 60605

Italy

Rome +39-06 510 661
Sesto San Giovanni (MI) +39-02 24 10 141

Luxembourg

Amdahl Luxembourg SARL
65, rue des Romains
L - 8041 Strassen
Grand Duche Du Luxembourg
Tel: +352-26 1130

Netherlands

Maarssen +31-346 244 900

Portugal

Lisbon +351-21 799 4030

Switzerland

Glattbrugg +41-1 880 44 00

United Kingdom

Hook +44-1256 386200
Manchester +44-161 9326254
Solihull +44-121 7132200

Amdahl is a registered trademark of Fujitsu IT Holdings, Inc.
InfraCare is a trademark or registered trademark of Fujitsu Limited
or its subsidiaries in Japan and other countries. Adaptive Integration
is a trademark of Fujitsu Technology Solutions, Inc. Aperture is a
trademark of Aperture Technologies, Inc. All other trademarks and
product names are the property of their respective owners.

The information in this document may be superseded by subsequent
documents. For details regarding delivery of specific products,
features, and services, contact your local Amdahl IT Services
representative.

© 2002 Fujitsu Technology Solutions, Inc.
All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.
MM003147-UKA-001 [1:1] 08/02