Kevin Tombs and Roger White

Fixed fee and rapid response is SSL recipe for success

One firm that if anything is benefiting from the ongoing economic downturn in Severnside Software Ltd (SSL) of Gloucester.

The company has been so successful that in the last two years, in spite of the global recession, it has doubled in size with ten staff and increased business by 50 per cent with a healthy turnover of just over £1 million.

MD Roger White explains that the main reason for this is the company's almost unique pricing structure for its clients – a fixed fee from day one with absolutely no hidden add-ons.

"There are plenty of companies out there selling goods and services who will give you a basic quote that sounds like a good deal," said Roger.

"But when you look into it the basic deal is never what the customer really wants or needs and that's when all the little extras come in which really start to rack up the price.

"It's like going to a restaurant where the main course is reasonably priced, but when you take into account side dishes and drinks, it's not so cheap after all.

"With us, we operate on a fixed fee basis with absolutely no add-ons, and that includes monitoring, maintenance and repairs.

"I think in today's economic climate, people especially welcome this approach as, whatever happens they can feel secure that there will be no nasty surprises in the post six months down the line.

"That includes remote monitoring and support for clients' software, although often clients feel more secure to have someone visit their premises to sort out problems.

"Which is why we often find ourselves flying half way round the world, as we have clients as far away as India and South America.

"We have a team of ten now so there's always someone we can send to wherever they are needed.

"Our speed of response is also a major selling point.

"With most businesses, if the computer crashes, everything comes to a halt so you really need to know someone is going to turn up as soon as possible as the longer the system is down the higher the frustration rate goes.

"You might have a production facility with 150 workers lying idle for a day which obviously is a huge problem for the client and a huge pressure for us.

"In the past we've worked through the night so that the client could get back to work in the morning.

"Because we are big enough and have clients in so many time zones around the world we can have an in-house help desk manned 24/7 who will get an engineeer on the job immediately.

"We are also increasingly dealing with cyber attacks on commercial systems which can bring down a client's website which is in many cases the company's shop window to the world.

"Distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks are a real- and growing-threat to businesses worldwide.

"Unlike access attacks that penetrate security perimeters to steal information, DDoS attacks paralyse Internet systems by overwhelming servers, network links, and network devices (routers, firewalls, etc.) with bogus traffic.

"Designed to elude detection by today's most popular tools, these attacks can quickly incapacitate a targeted business, costing victims thousands, if not millions, of pounds in lost revenue and productivity.

"By adopting new purpose-built solutions from us designed specifically to detect and defeat DDoS attacks, businesses can keep their business operations running smoothly.

"We can take steps to protect the client's router or advise on upgrading the router. Many small businesses rely on cheap routers that are not really up to the job. It's not worth the risk" ●

For further information,
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