



Outsourcing our email communications and website hosting to Cobweb has played a key role in helping us grow our business and reach a staggering £16 million revenue this year

lookfantastic, a leading chain of hair and beauty salons with two dynamic e-commerce websites, selected Cobweb's Hosted Microsoft Exchange Solution to take the headache out of managing email communication for 400 staff in 17 salons around the country.

1 Customer Profile

- Industry** : Hair and Beauty Salons
- Business Start Date** : 1978
- Number of Premises** : 17
- Number of Employees** : 400
- Number of Mobile Workers : 50
- Services with Cobweb** : Business Email & Web Hosting.

lookfantastic has come a long since the opening of its first hairdressing salon in 1978.

Today, with 17 salons around the country, an impressive training division and two e-commerce hair and beauty websites - www.lookfantastic.com and www.lookmantastic.com.

com. – lookfantastic is a leading player in the hair and beauty arena.

The company currently employs over 400 people and has seen a vast increase in its revenues in the last 10 years and is on track to achieve £16 million in 2008.

2 The Challenge

lookfantastic is an ambitious company. Since its inception, the company's CEO has always strived for and achieved rapid expansion and development. But five years ago, it was becoming more and more apparent that fast growth was taking its toll on the existing IT infrastructure.

Up until 2003, all IT management was handled by a small internal team but as the company grew, the existing infrastructure was becoming unreliable and could not keep pace with the burgeoning number of staff or the ever changing technology landscape.

"With such rapid growth, it was inevitable that we were going to experience growing pains," commented Daniel Crown, CEO at lookfantastic. "Our 'pains' were with our IT infrastructure; it was becoming expensive to run, impossible to update and slow to expand. Most importantly, it was incredibly time consuming and resource-hungry, which was distracting us from our core business objective of growing the company."

The existing system was also struggling to cope with the diverse geographic nature of lookfantastic's salon and could not easily adapt to emerging technologies such as shared applications and remote devices, such as Black-Berry.

"Overall, it was clear that our in-house IT solution was not working for us as a company. It was time for a change."

3 The Solution

Initially, lookfantastic considered expanding its existing Iteam and investing in the necessary hardware and software to run all email applications. But it soon became apparent that was too costly and would not solve the headache of managing the IT on an ongoing basis.

Case Study

Lookfantastic

COBWEB

It was then that lookfantastic looked at outsourcing. "Outsourcing all email communication was the only option available that would free up our team and allow us to concentrate on our core business," explained Crown. "It would also ensure that we had best of breed technology, a highly secure infrastructure and a solution that can grow as we grew." lookfantastic opted for Cobweb Solutions Microsoft Hosted Exchange, which was not only impressive from a technological point of view but also offered an all encompassing support package that will manage and maintain the entire email communication system.

Microsoft Hosted Exchange Business Email is a managed service that provides employees with access to email, calendars and contacts anywhere at anytime. It is also compatible with all smartphones such as Black-Berry, which has enabled lookfantastic to arm 50 of its staff with BlackBerry devices to access email on the go. Priced on a per seat basis, Hosted Exchange has enabled lookfantastic to simply buy the amount of licenses they needed to match the current needs of the business.

Cobweb's support solution and ongoing management means that lookfantastic does not have to worry about IT upgrades, virus attacks or downtime as this is taken care of, freeing up lookfantastic's team to concentrate on growing the business.

"Cobweb has a brilliant track record in taking the hassle out of email," explained Crown. "By outsourcing all our IT, we know that our email and website will 'simply work'. We don't have to worry about it or spend time ensuring that it is fully up to date and waste valuable resource thinking about it. Outsourcing our IT has been a key component in enabling our continued growth by freeing us up to concentrate on driving our business forward."



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