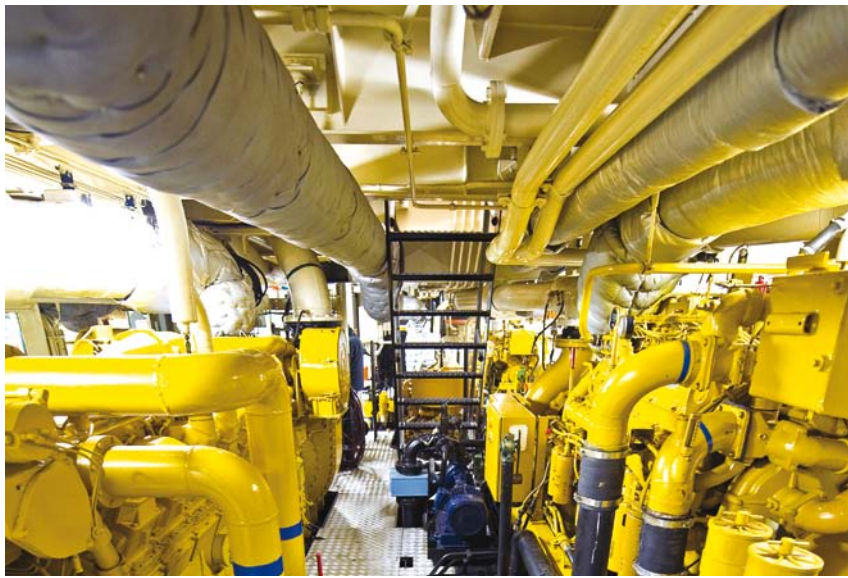**Datel**

Advansys

"The Datel Advansys team always reliably provide friendly, expert advice if we need them, and we value their support in helping us to build a strong, resilient IT infrastructure to take ou r growing business forwards."

Ian Cleary
Financial Director
IPU Ltd

customer review

Industrial Power Units (IPU) Ltd is an established industrial company providing high-quality engineering solutions for diesel and gas engines anywhere in the world.

Specialist areas include non-electric manual starting solutions, engine control and remote monitoring, engine silencing, engine heating and engine filtration for almost any marine, industrial and offshore engine application. In the UK, IPU represents a number of high profile brands in the commercial groundcare market.

From the company's head office near Oldbury in the West Midlands, Operations and Financial Director Ian Cleary and IT manager Sagar Hussain explain how Datel Advansys has helped IPU to build a leaner, yet more resilient, IT infrastructure.

What were the original business drivers that led to involving Datel Advansys?

IC: As is quite common, our IT infrastructure had grown organically over time and we had concerns that it had come adrift from the needs of the business. Disaster recovery levels were also no longer fit for purpose. In today's tough marketplace, the stakes are higher and the impact of downtime is greater. The company is doing well, despite the recession, but if we are unable to trade, we lose business and possibly customers, too. We must be able to maintain consistently high levels of service.

We're an international company and our overseas sales people and UK sales people out on the road feel disconnected from head office without tools such as email or access to essential business information.

What type of infrastructure did you have in place previously?

SH: A creaking one! We had about a dozen servers of different makes, models and vintages. The older ones were slow, and even the newer ones were struggling to keep up with the increased numbers of users due to our steep business growth. Administration of this mixed environment was a nightmare, so simplification, too, was a goal.

We recognised early in 2010 that the situation was getting worse and we needed a new way forward. We'd been a Datel customer since October 2008 for support on Sage Line 500 and Sage SalesLogix and they put the problem to Datel Advansys.

IC: We met with Datel Advansys at their Warrington office. They suggested consolidating onto a virtualised platform and demonstrated the benefits of going down that route in terms of increased resilience and lower running costs.

Like any business at the moment, we are keen to keep a lid on our overheads. Total cost of ownership of our server estate over the long term is an important area for cost control. It doesn't make sense to allow 'server sprawl' to consume expensive energy for power and cooling, take up space and divert our IT team from their core responsibilities.

Datel Advansys also explained how virtualisation would enable us to benefit from greater flexibility and higher availability in being able to dynamically allocate resources to match business need.

Improved disaster recovery was one of your original drivers. Do you feel in a stronger position now in this respect?

SH: Definitely. There's greater continuity of service. As recommended by Datel Advansys, we have a highly available pair of central servers supporting the main business, with an additional remote server that hosts constantly updated copies of the live servers, as well as providing an environment for testing and training.

Work can be restarted on either central server in the event of a problem to enable trading to continue with very minor interruption, and we can also perform routine maintenance and other functions without taking out a server. In the event of a total loss of the computer room, we can fall back on the remote server to support the key business functions.

IC: In effect, virtualisation creates the opportunity to 'mothball' anything not working as it should and fix the problem without any significant impact on the end user, who can carry on working.

How did you find the transition to a new way of operating?

SH: The Datel Advansys team took on the whole project, not just procuring the right hardware and software, but installation and project management, too. We liked the fact that the whole solution could be delivered from a single source, with one partner being accountable.

Like any major IT migration, there were bound to be a few teething problems, but Datel Advansys had a partnership approach to working with us, and provided every support. At the same time, Datel Advansys upgraded our

email environment, migrating us from Microsoft Exchange 2003 to Microsoft Exchange 2010. This has refreshed our essential communications platform for the foreseeable future.

The skills transfer has been excellent, and another member of the IT team and I have also taken VMware training, organised by Datel Advansys.

What other benefits are you experiencing from having a virtualised environment?

SH: It's still early days, but we've achieved our goal of simplified management and can monitor and administer our infrastructure through a single server. At the same time, licensing is more straightforward as we're not trying to keep tabs on servers of differing ages running different software.

As a result, the IT department now has more time to focus on more productive initiatives and be proactive in delivering efficiencies and news ways of working to the business. We're no longer fire-fighting all the time.

Another point: we were able to 'recycle' some of the newer servers we already had to provide a disaster recovery environment, in addition to the resilience that is inherent in a virtualised environment. Datel Advansys recommended we do this and it's another example of how their expertise has benefited our business.

IC: I'd like to endorse that. Working with Datel Advansys has been a good move. The Datel Advansys team always reliably provide friendly, expert advice if we need them, and we value their support in helping us to build a strong, resilient IT infrastructure to take our growing business forwards.

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About Datel Advansys

The Datel name is renowned within the IT industry for delivering complex solutions across a wide range of industry sectors. With over 150 people and offices across the UK, more than 900 companies trust Datel to design implement and support their business needs.

Datel Advansys is a specialist in IT infrastructure solutions; from initial consultancy, analysis and design, training and support, through to fully outsourced hosted or remote managed services.

Datel Advansys focuses primarily on the infrastructure and office productivity tools which are core to any IT solution. Specialising in hardware configuration network design and security and on-going management, Datel Advansys' team has years of experience delivering complex solutions to both small and large enterprises.

Our approach is to work with proven best of breed vendors and products, utilising proven processes procedures and methodologies to deliver projects on time and to budget. We are determined to ensure that our customers maximise business benefit from IT, by minimising both cost and risk, increasing performance, taking advantage of innovation and therefore safeguarding the business.

The IPU Ltd Solution:

- Two IBM System X servers, with shared storage area network

- VMware virtualisation software

- A new networking structure and updated email environment

- Expert consultancy from Datel Advansys