



Irish Continental Group Sails to Success with a Managed Services Solution



As the leading maritime transport and leisure group in Ireland, the Irish Continental Group (ICG) is responsible for carrying 6 million passengers, 0.4 million cars and 1.1 million teu (twenty foot equivalent units) of freight on their network every year. This is certainly a testament to the success of ICG, who have experienced phenomenal growth since their formation in 1972 as a joint venture to provide a direct ferry link from Ireland to Continental Europe.

The Brief

The existing IT infrastructure within ICG was designed with traditional booking methods in mind. However, the post millennium consumer was changing. New trends were emerging, including rapid increase in internet usage at home, increased demand for on-line booking facilities and a rise in customer service expectations. The need to deliver a consistent round the clock service was becoming apparent for ICG.

It was very clear that the first step in providing customers with the highest standards of customer service was to guarantee system availability and deliver a superior customer experience at a competitive price. With the current system in place this could not be delivered, so a systems upgrade was required to meet these changing needs.

As part of this upgrade, the primary requirements were a fully resilient, secure system that would guarantee the seamless continuity of Irish Ferries' business processes. If the system experienced any downtime, it would need to be rectified thoroughly and swiftly. It was imperative that any downtime caused the bare minimum of disruption to customers, and did not impact on revenue.

After both internal and external business reviews, the decision was made to outsource the monitoring and management of the Oracle environment. "We needed a partner that would complement and strengthen our existing IT capability, and have the expertise to implement a fail proof solution" Seamus McCarville, CIO, Irish Continental Group.



A Solid Partnership and a Successful Business Solution

With the decision to outsource made, ICG undertook the process of identifying a third party service provider. From their initial reviews Data Electronics was the clear choice.

“What set Data Electronics apart from the rest was their approach to the whole process. Their explanation of the solution was precise and detailed and their implementation of it was rigorous and thorough. Overall the solution was set up with almost military precision, using well designed robust procedures. From the outset, at every level from the CEO to the field staff, Data Electronics demonstrated they were fully committed to ICG and I had every confidence they would be able to deliver the service they had guaranteed,” comments Seamus McCarville.



Seamus McCarville, CIO

Data Electronics, in conjunction with its partner DNM Technology, implemented a comprehensive solution whereby ICG's Oracle environment is remotely monitored and managed 24 x 7x 365 days. “Our partnership with ICG is a great example of how selective outsourcing can deliver tangible benefits to organizations of all sizes, says Eoin Houlihan, Business Development consultant with Data Electronic.

Commenting on the solution, Seamus outlines what the key success factors were. “What has made the solution so successful is the strong partnership we have built up with Data Electronics. If a problem ever arises we have direct access to the CEO, Maurice Mortell, which gives us great peace of mind. From project inception to deployment the level of service and support we have experienced has been outstanding. I know I don't need to worry about the system, as Data Electronics manages it so well,” he adds. “I have complete confidence that in the event of a crisis that Data Electronics have all the bases covered.”

“In terms of on-line booking, every single moment spent off the air is a loss in revenue and can have a knock-on effect in damaging our reputation. For this reason the service Data Electronics provides, while it is not a core part of our business, is integral to its success

Implementation of the remote managing and monitoring solution has resulted in a reduction in downtime which in turn has led to considerable cost savings. It has also allowed for the freeing up of internal resources which have been redistributed to more value adding business activities. “A huge amount of additional pressure has been lifted off our staff and we are now able to concentrate on building our business knowing our IT systems are in safe hands,” Seamus concludes

Summary

- Partnering with Data Electronics delivers a proven, seamless and reliable service to ICG and their customers
 - Data Electronics delivers a superior Oracle monitoring and management capability and service
 - Decreased downtime, minimizing disruption to Irish Ferries online business
 - Complimented the internal skills and capabilities of ICG
 - Improved operational effectiveness allowing for internal resources to be utilized effectively elsewhere across the business
 - Guaranteed continuity of service and access to a pool of skilled resources
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