

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC FINDS THE RIGHT BALANCE WITH DATA ELECTRONICS



In Ireland, Mitsubishi Electric was a pioneer when it decided eight years ago to outsource its entire IT function. Through it all, Data Electronics has been at Mitsubishi's side, providing the IT skills, resources and consultancy the company needs.

It was around the turn of the millennium that Mitsubishi Electric Ireland was faced with a tough decision after the departure of its IT manager. Although its turnover had at times surpassed €90 million in Ireland, it was always a lean operation, never with more than 45 employees. As a leading company in the distribution of electronics and heating and cooling systems, the company was increasingly reliant on a diverse range of internal IT systems. But it was also relatively small, with essentially no IT department – how could it find and attract one new individual to handle all its needs?

Considering its options, the company felt sure that outsourcing would be their solution. The Mitsubishi Electric Headquarters was not yet outsourcing its IT in other territories, but the Irish subsidiary argued convincingly that outsourcing to a skilled partner would offer just what they needed: specialist and diverse skills available on demand, without any HR headaches, as well as substantial hardware and networking resources without the associated capital investment or risk.

After searching the market, Mitsubishi Electric Ireland found an answer to their problem from Data Electronics. With the approval of headquarters and following extensive consultation with Data Electronics, the Irish company relocated all its servers to the Data Electronics data centre, a fully secure, tier IV facility ideally suited to the provision of hosting and related services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC SWITCH TO OUTSOURCING

According to Martin Maher, General Manager for Mitsubishi Electric Ireland, the transition to outsource IT with Data Electronics has been a complete success, with services now covering a wide spectrum:

- 24/7 managed server environment, backed by rigorous SLAs
- Provision and centralised hosting of essential software including e-mail and productivity applications
- Secure internet access and web hosting
- Storage Area Network (SAN) and tape back-ups
- Managed IT security, including firewall management
- Full desktop support, with a standardised desktop environment that makes repairs as easy as removing the faulty device and plugging in a replacement





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The outsourcing model has also allowed the entire IT environment to work more efficiently, he notes, with top-class desktop support from Data Electronics, simplified administration and much higher IT service quality.

"The staff need IT to do their jobs. My function and IT's function is to make sure they have that, and since we've moved to the outsourcing model with Data Electronics, that has been the case without exception," Martin says. "We're in a totally different environment now for IT. In football terms, we've moved from the second division up to the premier league. We now have everything hosted in a Tier 4, state-of-the-art data centre, with rigorous service levels, and it works."

THE RIGHT CONNECTION

An important aspect of Mitsubishi Electric's work with Data Electronics is the long-term, collaborative nature of the relationship. Martin explains that the company is constantly seeking to tailor its IT to exactly match its business environment:

"We're constantly tailoring our IT to what our business environment is, and Data Electronics are happy to work with us from that point of view," he says. "We have a very good relationship, and I don't have to go through layers of bureaucracy to get things done. With some of the largest outsourcing companies, your only way in is a telephone helpdesk if you have a problem. Data Electronics do provide a helpdesk – and a web portal I can use to report and view faults, which is very handy - but I can also pick up the phone and speak to the top people if I need to. That's very important to us."

Data Electronics and Mitsubishi Electric are now working together to deliver a long-term vision for Mitsubishi's IT function, modeled around the concept of utility computing. For instance, Data Electronics now owns all of the servers, associated hardware and software licences that Mitsubishi Electric uses, freeing up more administrative time and eliminating complexity for the company. In the long term, the plan is to simplify IT even further.

"We would like to move to a model where all applications are hosted and can be accessed through a single desktop icon," Martin explains. "This will give us maximum flexibility in our working arrangements, since so many of our staff work remotely or on the road. We want to reinvent the whole concept of the office, where the data centre becomes the centre of our IT world. Data Electronics are fully supportive of this – they're right behind us."