

Sisk Builds for the Future with Data Electronics



John Sisk & Son Ltd is the largest general contracting company in Ireland with turnover in excess of €1.2billion. The company is headquartered in Dublin, with offices also located in Belfast, Cork, Dundalk, Galway, Limerick, Sligo and Waterford. Sisk has worked with many of the world's leading companies and is currently involved in the regeneration of the Docklands in Dublin including the Spencer Dock development, National Conference Centre and AIB headquarters.

The Brief

As a result of the post-millennium building boom Sisk experienced exponential growth. In line with this growth and developments in IT compliance and regulation, it became apparent to Sisk that there was a need to develop the company's back-end systems and introduce new technology, to safeguard the business and ensure business continuity in the event of a crisis. In addition, there had been a number of localised power issues which impacted their IT system's availability and performance. It was therefore critical that the risk of any future downtime was eliminated, as these disruptions would have serious implications for the running of the business.

"With our IT infrastructure located and managed from Sisk head office we were exposed to a significant risk. Our head office was a single point of failure. If we experienced any disruptions to service our business would come to halt. We just couldn't allow any external factors to impact our business in this manner. We needed a solution that was fail proof," said Ken Kennedy, IT Manager.

In 2006, Initial steps were taken through Sisk's network services provider, Interfusion, to selectively outsource aspects of this solution. To ensure that Sisk's IT infrastructure could fully support its rapidly expanding business, a Data Centre capable of providing a centralised solution with built in redundancy to reinforce and stabilise their IT system was needed. Data Electronics was chosen following a comprehensive review process.

"What set Data Electronics apart was the fact they came so highly recommended by our network services provider, who had partnered with them in the past. They had an extremely impressive client list which was an endorsement of the quality of their service and gave us peace of mind in trusting them with our business," said Ken Kennedy, Group IT Manager, Sisk.

Later in 2006, a business impact analysis undertaken by Sisk highlighted the need for a comprehensive disaster recovery system and back up strategy for all of its operations. The existing IT system could not deliver this level of support so an outsourced solution to meet these requirements was investigated.

“The results of the business impact analysis made it clear to us that in order to eliminate unwanted risk and maintain business continuity it was essential we put in place measures to protect our business in the event of disaster. Our analysis concluded that the financial implications of undertaking this task in-house would have run into the millions of Euro and when we compared this to the cost of outsourcing the decision was basically made for us. Having worked previously with Data Electronics, they were the clear choice,” commented Ken Kennedy.

Unique Business Solution

Data Electronic’s initial solution for Sisk involved remotely monitoring their centralised IT operations at their head office in Dublin. Then as a result of the business impact analysis the scope of Data Electronics solution was expanded. Sisk’s requirements in this regard were very specific so Data Electronics developed a bespoke solution. In partnership with Interfusion this unique solution involved relocating Sisk’s IT infrastructure to Data Electronics’ data centre where it is monitored and supported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

“From the outset, Data Electronics were extremely stringent about adhering to their own set of quality standards. We were hugely relieved by this thorough and meticulous approach. It was a reassurance to know the job was being done in a professional, precise and detailed manner,” said Ken Kennedy.

“We were also very impressed by the speed and efficiency with which Data Electronics completed the job. From the point at which we decided to relocate the system to it being fully operational took only four months, which was far sooner than we expected. In our line of work keeping to deadlines and quality of service provision is of utmost importance. Data Electronics delivered on their promises and continue to provide superb support to us.”

In outlining the main benefits of the solution, Ken commented “The stability of our system has dramatically improved as has its reliability. We now have a secure, resilient infrastructure based at Data Electronics and 24/7 support means if an issue arises it is dealt with immediately. Furthermore, as all our material is backed up nothing is lost.” “A recent power outage demonstrated the value of the service Data Electronics provides us with. The outage took place on the main carrier to our head office and as a result of the system being housed at Data Electronics our headquarters was the only building affected (instead of all 8 offices). The rest of the 600 strong workforce continued to operate as usual. The issue was rectified immediately but could have been very serious if the system hadn’t been in place. Knowing everything is in safe hands means I rarely have to make contact with Data Electronics, except to let them know they are doing a great job.”

Commenting on the solution Steve McNicholas from Interfusion said, “Having worked with Sisk for a number of years and also in partnership with Data Electronics we believe the solution we have provided for Sisk will enable them to continue grow with the support of a state of the art IT system.”

Factbook

- Data Electronics hosts all of Sisk's Production environment. These systems and applications are monitored on a 24 x 7 x 365.
- Provision of bespoke solution to meet complex client requirements
- Guaranteed stability and reliability of service in addition to 24/7 support
- Speedy installation and seamless transition to new location at Data Electronics