



Maurice Mortell, Data Electronics.

The perfect balance

Addressing the Irish shortage of data centre space and following the trend for virtual IT management, Data Electronics has the perfect balancing act.

WITH industry-wide recognition ranging from achieving a rank of 1st in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 Awards to recently receiving ISO 9001:2000 accreditation, Data Electronics is moving from strength to strength as a leading provider of 24/7 IT outsourcing and managed services.

The company, which was founded in 1975, opened a 13,000 square foot extension to its Kilcarbery Park data centre in 2005 worth €2.5m and plans to complement this with the opening of a 40,000 square foot facility in Blanchardstown by the middle of the second quarter of 2008.

There is a constant need for expansion with the increasing shortage of data centre space in Ireland, says Maurice Mortell, chief executive of Data Electronics.

“Capacity-wise we’re down to the bare minimum in Ireland at the moment. There isn’t a huge amount of space left. Of the sites that were built back six or seven years ago the capacity has now been taken up,” he said.

Expanding with the Times

To this end Data Electronics has been focusing on expansion and based its growth strategy around this. “In the last two years we have experienced extensive growth and have extended our sales strategy significantly around developing our managed services capability,” adds Mortell.

“Our sales strategy is about getting the right revenue mix into the business. We strive to maintain a good customer mix, the right terms of contracts and the right mix between our services and our collocation offerings.”

The success of this strategy has yielded excellent growth for Data Electronics, resulting in the need for more data centre capacity which has led to the development of the existing Blanchardstown site.

However the largest growth in the market over the past 24 months, according to Mortell, has been not only from a capacity perspective but from a services one, with a focus on virtual IT services.

“A number of client solutions we have implemented recently have been for remote monitoring management where no space has been taken at all, which was quite interesting. Essentially we’re delivering the same service that we would within the data centre but out in an office environment.

“We’re giving companies access to the same sort of skill sets and capabilities that the data centre offers from our network operation centre in a 24/7 capabilities, and the tools and processes that run that, so it’s like a virtual IT department,” said Mortell.

This Year’s Model

Data Electronics has a model which it has been maturing for the last four years around a virtual management helpdesk system that effectively links clients into its services with every capability. Using a web-based portal, customers can go in and view what is happening across their data infrastructure in real time.

Now that a culture of outsourcing has become part of the terrain for companies like Data Electronics, Mortell says that many of the tasks they are seeing now, as opposed to just dealing with mission critical data, are email management and data storage.

“The market has matured from the supplier’s perspective but also from the customer perspective. Outsourcing is now just part and parcel of an option you can look at with regards to what you want to do with your infrastructure,” he said.

However there is plenty of room for more growth with the managed services market growing by 10pc year on year in Ireland.

Customers availing of the services offered by Data Electronics include telecoms, technology companies, financial services and the construction industry.

Mortell finds that the number one thing driving customers back to Data Electronics is customer service, mostly importantly engagement.

“With regard to building up business and retaining it, what it boils down to is the people we have working here. The company had been going for 35 years and it’s always been delivering IT services so there is a very strong service culture within the group and there always has been” says Mortell.

He says everything from how the customer engages with the company down to how they access documentation and technical expertise is paramount to the overall experience.

Secondly, the facilities in Kilcarbery and in Blanchardstown are Tier IV, which is the highest standard worldwide for a data centre from an infrastructure perspective, and considered state-of-the-art.

“If you look at the providers that are out there we are the only Irish entity and in some respects this might lead us to be seen as the minnows but in other respects this is our niche area and we are prepared to put our money where our mouth is when it comes to investing,” said Mortell.