

A Case Study in Microsoft licensing

For



Client profile

Harper Macleod is a leading Scottish law firm that has a number of notable highlights including:

- Legal advisors to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games
- Law Firm of the Year 2013 (sixth time in seven years)
- Managing Team of the Year (fourth time in five years)

Harper Macleod was established in 1988 and has 50 Partners, 175 fee-earners with a total complement of 300 staff based in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. It is a commercial law firm with a broad range of services across key industry sectors, as well as catering for some private clients.

The firm's web site is www.harpermacleod.co.uk.

Business situation

The firm decided to move to a new standard operating environment for its desktop computers in order to provide its lawyers and support teams with an even more efficient environment to enable client service to be maintained and improved. Additionally, the firm wanted to review the deployment of the new desktop environment via a virtualised system to enable ease of deployment, change and growth.

The firm had obtained a report on its current Microsoft licensing position but needed advice on how to best to acquire or upgrade licenses to enable the firm to deploy the new desktop experience, which is planned to commence towards the end of 2013.

Technical situation

Harper MacLeod's current environment runs older software applications that are soon to be end of life or are no longer capable of providing the efficiencies required for a modern and progressive law firm. The firm's IT Director, Richard Harvey, recognised the need to improve the systems even further (it has recently deployed a new document management system) and up-to-date user applications from Microsoft are required to achieve the firm's goals for its technology.

Furthermore, the firm needed to understand the implications of delivering the new desktop to every member of staff, regardless of their location or device being used, via a virtual desktop deployment system.

An identified area of concern was that, in spite of receiving a comprehensive audit of Microsoft licenses, it was still going to be difficult to understand how the firm could move forward to the new environment. Harper Macleod considered that resource could be better utilised elsewhere by outsourcing this audit to Hoffbrand Consulting.

Work/Solution provided

Due to the good experience gained by Harper MacLeod working with Hoffbrand Consulting in other areas, the consultancy was instructed to act on behalf of the firm with three licensing partners.

Hoffbrand Consulting made contact with the licensing partners in order to start to gather information required.

The information came in good time, however, as is expected from different suppliers, the format and product descriptions were different in each case, some using unexplained acronyms and product names that were less than properly descriptive.

The work provided by Hoffbrand Consulting was to take each response and normalise the data provided into a document that could be easily understood with no unexplained acronyms. There were a considerable amount of lengthy discussions with each of the licensing partners in order to gain full clarification of what was being offered together with costs for both the short and long term. 'Translation' into easily followed language was carried out.

A précis of the interaction between each of the suppliers on a daily basis was provided in the document and tables showing comparisons of pricing from each supplier were provided in the executive summary for easy review by the Harper Macleod team.

At the end of each working day, an updated document was provided together with a redline showing the differences from previous version.

At the end of the engagement, Hoffbrand Consulting provided the firm with an electronic copy of all email correspondence, together with electronic copies of all supplier quotations and versions of the document.

Benefits

The benefits supplied by Hoffbrand Consulting can be summarised as follows:

- simplified document provided
- time saved
- effort saved
- pressure reduced
- value for money

With the information provided by Hoffbrand Consulting, Harper Macleod is now in the best position to make a valued judgement on two fronts, 1 - how best to go about buying the licenses and 2 - whether the new desktop, deployed via a virtualised system, provides the best solution for the firm or not.

Recommendation

We knew that we needed to have our Microsoft licensing in a position to be able to provide new a desktop environment to our users. Additionally, we needed to understand the licensing implications if we wanted to provide the new environment as virtual PCs.

After an introduction of his services by Paul Hoffbrand to a gathering of three law firms in Edinburgh, we decided that these would suit our needs due to the experience that was evident, our relationship built over the previous 12 months and the value-for-money daily rate.

We needed to save time and effort in order for us to concentrate on other aspects of the project and to continue to rollout our new document management system. We met with Hoffbrand Consulting to review the goal of the project and Paul took on the challenge with enthusiasm.

Hoffbrand Consulting created a good working relationship with each of the suppliers that will be vital when we make our final decision and the firm very effectively took the pressure off us to gather the information we needed to make a valued judgement.

We are delighted with the way the Hoffbrand Consulting dealt with our needs and look forward to working with them again in the future.

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