

The British Computer Society

Kelway assists The British Computer Society to achieve best value support

The British Computer Society

The British Computer Society (BCS) is the leading professional body for those working in IT. A registered charity with a worldwide membership exceeding 65,000 members in over 100 countries, is the qualifying body for Chartered IT Professionals (CITP) and aims to promote the study and practice of computing. It is licensed by the Engineering Council to award both Chartered Engineer status (CEng) and Incorporated Engineer status (IEng) and also by the Science Council to award Chartered Scientist status (CSci).

Phil Rea, Business Manager at Kelway, said "The British Computer Society has a long standing relationship with Kelway delivering a number of strategically important projects. Our current retainer contract affords BCS with a flexible and best value approach to accessing a wide range of business critical maintenance and support services to back-up the in-house IT resource."

The Challenge

The organisation's management headquarters is in Swindon, whilst it also has a high quality conference/meeting facility located at offices in central London. Significant parts of these two centres of operation have been supported by Kelway since 2005 and currently an important retainer contract is in place providing business critical maintenance and support to underpin the in-house IT resource.

Kelway was initially contracted by BCS to provide specialist technical assistance to optimise a Cisco installation at its London offices, remotely supported from the Swindon HQ. The effective resolution of issues relating to applications sitting on the network led BCS to retain Kelway to handle two further projects. Following a competitive tender, the first assignment involved the design and build of a new infrastructure involving a Cisco back bone, leveraging Kelway's extensive expertise. The second was the relocation of BCS' headquarters in Swindon, including the server room, a project which was successfully completed without disruption to day-to-day activities.

Moving forward, BCS required cost effective and ongoing technical assistance that could be guaranteed to deliver a fast resolution to any arising issue, so as to minimise its impact on the business of the Society.

"Process driven and efficient, with a fix achieved within 24 hours, the retainer contract provides a good service for ad hoc issues."

Ashley Stopforth, IT Service Delivery Manager - The British Computer Society

The Solution

Kelway's solution was to offer BCS a retainer contract designed specifically to ensure that it had the expert support it required when it was needed, operating on a 'pay as you go' basis. Initially covering the London office, and since expanded to support Swindon, the retainer contract provides BCS with a flexible solution to the ongoing challenge of managing multiple technologies at more than one location.

Philip Rea, Business Manager, Kelway, explains: "A retainer contract typically involves the customer allocating a mutually agreeable sum of funds on an annual basis to cover call outs throughout that period. In the event that the retainer is not fully spent, funds may be rolled over into the following year's contract or allocated against other projects. The client benefits from only being charged for the support services they use, thus helping them to effectively manage the cost of maintaining their IT network."

Problem resolution would typically involve a client's in-house IT team contacting the Kelway help desk to log the issue. If a fix cannot be handled immediately over the phone, second line action involving remote trouble shooting and, if necessary, third line on-site services will follow – all delivered within an agreed time period and often during out of hours - with the aim of minimising any disruption caused by technology failure.

In the case of BCS, areas of expertise called upon leveraging the retainer contract include Cisco, Solarwinds and Microsoft technologies. Typical issues might relate to firewalls and security, switching, networking and load balances. BCS has also recently installed back-up systems in London comprising part of the Society's disaster recovery plan, which may call upon the retainer contract to resolve any problems that arise, avoiding the need to send resource from Swindon to London for quick fixes.

The Results

Essentially, Kelway works hand-in-hand with BCS' in-house team, providing important back-up, when and where BCS requires it, which may also involve handling problems affecting BCS' members using IT services in the London offices.

Ashley Stopforth, British Computer Society's IT Service Delivery Manager, explains: "Our London offices are important as they provide a central meeting point for members who may be holding

conferences and seminars. Whilst our on-site resource and Service Desk in Swindon can handle day-to-day issues that arise there, if a problem involves the wireless network then we do need access to certified Cisco expertise, which is where Kelway will step in. Process driven and efficient, with a fix achieved within 24 hours, the retainer contract provides a good service for ad hoc issues such as these."

Key benefits

Malcolm Roberts, British Computer Society's IT Manager, said: "It would be impossible to forecast the sort of technical issues we may run up against, at either our London or Swindon offices, in any one year. But securing a fast fix and controlling the costs involved is essential. The retainer agreement with Kelway helps BCS effectively manage our budgets, whilst ensuring we have access to the expertise we need, where and when we need it. This may be as simple as an entry level engineer working on a desktop issue, to consultant level accredited expertise to deal with a more complex network problem. Moreover, should we not spend the annual retainer, it can be rolled over to the following year, delivering best value for BCS and its members."

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