

BOURNE LEISURE AND LOMBARD TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

"We are getting a better deal, and using as few resources as possible to do the job properly. Price is most definitely a part of it, but the relationship, the service and the flexible options that Lombard offers have made it a business decision which continues to over deliver against my expectations". Bourne Leisure

Background

Bourne Leisure, the £670m+ UK holiday group, has spent recent years rationalising its IT department, standardising systems and integrating an acquisition. With its sights now on driving more business online, the company benefits from a financial leasing arrangement with Lombard Technology Services that gives it greater flexibility over IT assets and frees up capital for expansion.

With roots stretching back to 1964, Bourne Leisure is one of the largest providers of holiday home ownership and short breaks in the UK. Owning and operating a leisure asset base with a value in excess of £1 billion, its well-known brands include Haven, Haven Europe, British Holidays, Warner and Butlins, with some 64 resorts and sites across the UK and Europe.

Challenge

Careful management of Bourne's IT assets has allowed it to focus its resources as effectively as possible in areas which deliver the best return on investment. Following the acquisition of the Rank Holiday Division in October 2000, a rationalisation of systems and a restructure of the IT team was essential to deliver the efficiencies necessary to reduce overall IT running costs. "The acquisition resulted in an almost five-fold growth in scale and represented a significant integration challenge," says Simon Crawshaw, head of information services at Bourne Leisure.

The company drove out costs by standardising on core business systems, supporting infrastructure and renegotiating contracts across the group. "We have adopted a much more pragmatic approach to the use of technology solutions. We would much rather implement simpler systems which deliver benefits early, than hold out for an all-encompassing solution, which never really materialises."



Solution

Crawshaw says that managing IT assets through leasing makes great sense for the company. Bourne had previously been using Hewlett-Packard Financial Services, and while the initial leasing agreement with HP delivered the expected benefits, Crawshaw was keen to take the concept a step further within Bourne. He sought a specialist who could offer a closer level of proactive management and expertise.

"At the end of July 2004, we bought back a lease from HP and re-financed using Lombard instead. The restructuring gives

us flexible return dates and a quick turnaround on kit. This latest deal is for a £1.5m lease over three years to provide each user with latest technology PCs equipped with 17-inch flat panel monitors and a PCI-Express architecture.”

Crawshaw says that Lombard differentiated itself from other providers principally because it took the time to understand Bourne’s business. “Like many organisations, we like to develop long term relationships with our suppliers. Lombard’s knowledge of us as a customer has been excellent and the value-add they provide as a result has been first-rate. That, together with specific costings to give us a better deal, has meant we have developed a good working relationship.”

Lombard offers Bourne a comprehensive service and Crawshaw cites areas like server purchases, “where Lombard has access to information and service options that we just don’t have the time or skills to investigate.” Lombard also helps lighten the administrative load. “Administering systems across a large geographical area can be a real headache, with different machine contracts terminating at different times,” says Crawshaw. “But with Lombard’s ‘OnSite’ tracking system and the ability to check any schedule, we get a functionally rich service.”

Benefits

- Leasing “makes life simpler and avoids the capital hit” for Bourne
- Moving its asset management and IT leases to Lombard means Bourne is getting a better deal, and using as few resources as possible to do the job properly
- Bourne’s drive for simplicity and a “building-block” approach has helped to reduce like-for-like IT costs by almost 50 per cent since the acquisition of Rank Holiday Division in 2000
- Lombard’s bulk deal negotiating muscle provides a major advantage for Bourne in getting a better deal from suppliers
- Disposal service provides safe and worry-free disposal of kit when it reaches the end of its life
- Lombard’s ‘OnSite’ asset tracking system eases IT management and administration processes

“Leasing is the best option for Bourne. It makes life simpler and avoids the capital hit. The relationship we now have with Lombard is ongoing, in part because its vendor independence is such a real value-add for us.”
Bourne Leisure

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