

Wall To Wall gets end-to-end service from Wavex



Wavex's managed services flexibly improve major TV production company's operations

About Wall to Wall

Television production company Wall To Wall has a global reputation for quality and innovation. Its productions (which include the celebrity-led genealogy format *Who Do You Think You Are?* and the BBC drama series *New Tricks*) have won a host of major television awards.

TV production work places wide ranging demands on Wall To Wall's IT infrastructure. People within the organisation come and go very quickly. Added to this is the problem that office-based production work and location-based facilities have very different requirements. The ability to provide scalable and flexible IT support is absolutely essential.

When Matt Bazzaco joined Wall To Wall as IT Manager in 2004, the company was already outsourcing its IT support. However, according to Bazzaco, "the outsourcing company was not giving any value and there were no systems in place to proactively manage the infrastructure."

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He added: "I realised immediately that our outsourcing arrangements had to change. Technology-wise we had a Citrix-based thin client environment, MS Exchange for email, SQL Server as a database, etc. What was different were the users – people in the television industry work in a slightly different way to their industries, and remote access is quite important to them. There's a high attrition rate, with perhaps 15-20 people starting in any one week on a new production, and maybe the same number moving elsewhere in another week. We needed a new managed services provider that could fit in with the way we work."

→ Turn on the tap

Wall to Wall has offices in London and New York, with many people also on location worldwide shooting new productions. "I basically wanted an outsourced IT support 'tap' that I could turn on and off. When you move quickly from 160 users to 60 you don't want to carry unnecessary support overheads," said Bazzaco.

His past experience of working for an outsourced IT services company meant he knew exactly what he wanted from a new provider at Wall To Wall. "I was looking for a company with senior IT expertise that I could outsource our helpdesk to. In the past I had lost a couple of contracts to Wavex and, in my new role, it made sense for me to hire a winning team!"

All of Wall To Wall IT support services were immediately outsourced to Wavex. "All support calls go through Wavex and are dealt with wherever possible by their engineers on the helpdesk," said Bazzaco. "In addition our 12 servers are monitored remotely using Wavex's proprietary software, MonX™."

→ Personal touch

When it came to renewing the initial contract with Wavex, Bazzaco decided on some changes. "After the first year, although the remote helpdesk was working very well, TV people like to 'put a face to a name', they like the personal touch. So we kept the MonX software but also brought in a Wavex engineer on-site permanently. He's here to keep an eye on the systems and solve any problems and, of course, he has the full support of the Wavex team should he need it. It's the best of both worlds really."

The company recently started production of a fourth series of New Tricks, which is always shot on location. "The turn-on/turn-off nature of Wavex support services means we can provide remote support for the production crew on the series as they need it," said Bazzaco. "It's very flexible and means I can apply the right level of expertise to the task without the recruitment hassle I'd need to go through to hire internal IT people."

→ Enthusiasm

Bazzaco is impressed with the way Wavex performs. "Having worked for an outsourced IT services company, I know there aren't many companies as eager and enthusiastic as Wavex. They know technology inside out, but also adopt an 'SME attitude' to things, so they try to understand you and your business before they make decisions. They're not IT geeks just trying to sell you stuff. They seem to care about what you're doing and go out of their way to help you."

The success of Wavex's ongoing services has led to some new projects at Wall To Wall. "We have a Microsoft Exchange email migration and a Citrix farm rebuild planned, and I am also involving Wavex in a lot of my decision making as well, to get their ideas and suggestions. They often come up with better ways of doing things," added Bazzaco.

→ New projects

Wavex's report generation from the helpdesk system helps Bazzaco keep on top of what's happening and gives him "good visibility in terms of how things are running." He added: "It's very in-depth and is good backup for me when talking to senior managers here about how we're doing."

While he is interested in saving costs through outsourcing to Wavex, Bazzaco is more interested in saving hassle. "If I employed a team of IT people here, there would be a lot more hassle in managing them and dealing with their progression, and indeed retaining them in the cyclical industry we work in. I get real value from Wavex, as well as a seamless IT environment. In this industry, we need things working – Wavex helps us achieve that."