

Long-Term Vision from Onyx Group



New nationwide network gives fast-growing optical and dental services provider competitive advantage. Optical Express is one of the fastest-growing optical and dental services providers in the UK. Founded in Edinburgh in 1991, today it has 187 clinics located in almost every major town and city in the UK.

Background

The company is committed to further expansion and, to achieve its growth targets, invested in a major communications upgrade linking every one of its clinics to the Glasgow-based Head Office via Onyx Group's state-of-the-art Data Centre.

The company's objective was better and faster management information: Head Office wanted real-time sales and customer data while store managers required a direct, always-on link enabling them to quickly receive news, updates and product information.

The sheer scale - networking 187 clinics across the UK - made it a complex project requiring additional input and management of other third party suppliers such as BT.

A significant amount of planning prior to launch was required. For example, how would security be handled? Was ADSL available at every site? How would the logistical issues be overcome? When was the best time to install on site, ensuring minimum store disruption?

Onyx Group's project team helped design, build and install the full networking infrastructure, visiting all 187 clinics to install routers, configure networks and test connectivity with both the data centre and Optical Express's head office.

Using Onyx Group's Data centre to host the servers brought three key benefits:

- Enhanced Security: proactive firewall management
- Scalability: On Demand bandwidth and server capacity as new clinics come onboard
- Support: First and second line support from Onyx Group to all 187 clinics

Solutions Overview

- Colocation of Email and Web Servers
- Managed Firewall Services
- Project Management and Implementation Services
- IBM xSeries Servers
- BT's ADSL networking

Key Business Benefits

The investment will greatly enhance Optical Express's competitive advantage by improving management information. And costs are controlled: by using the monthly managed service payment scheme, the customer was able to save tens of thousands on large capital outlay.

"Onyx Group's commitment and technical expertise was exceptional, from initial consultancy and design, through hardware and communications procurement, to full implementation and ongoing support of the communications infrastructure and back-office servers."

Craig Duffy
IT Manager, Optical Express