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case.study

Kingston Technology puts quality delivery at the heart of its reputation

Founded in 1987, Kingston Technology is a world class designer and manufacturer of memory-products for personal computers, servers and workstations, laser printers and, increasingly, handheld and portable electronic devices such as digital cameras and PDAs.

The company was hatched to address the needs of an industry which faced a shortage of memory. Kingston's answer was to design an industry-standard Single Inline Memory Module (SIMM) using readily available silicon. This brought all the benefits of standardisation to the marketplace, including the provision of higher quality products, lower cost and shortened lead-times. Today Kingston Technologies continues to thrive serving both computer OEMs and add-on specialists. Since its inception, Kingston Technology has also diversified into other product lines including processor upgrades and digital memory products.

The company's EMEA headquarters in Sunbury-on-Thames provides the hub for sales, marketing and distribution throughout the region. As Mark Brackley, MIS Director, puts it: "One of the focuses for this office is to ensure that we can deliver on the company's next day delivery policy. We serve an industry for whom instant gratification takes just a little too long! If we can't deliver next day it means lost business, disappointed customers and, ultimately, damage to our reputation."

Like the hardware market, the memory market is cyclical, although recent economic conditions have lead to a win-win situation for Kingston: During the downturn, IT departments turned to memory upgrades as the most cost-effective method of extending the life of hardware and upping server and desktop performance. Now, as companies end-of-life hardware which was installed to meet the perceived demands of Y2K, Kingston is experiencing continuing growth through its sales to the Channel & manufacturers. That means a tremendous amount of data to be processed via phone, fax and network, and then turned into deliverable packages for next-day delivery.

If delivery is a key performance indicator for Kingston Technology, the company has gathered its resources and designed systems to ensure that this requirement is met rigorously.

Like any other IT department serving a busy enterprise, the data centre is not problem-free, for example, the company has suffered with equipment failures as a result of heat build-up in the computer room. "Part of the problem is the ceiling mounted air conditioning units which are a legacy from the previous occupiers." says Brackley "As the temperature in the room rose to the high 40˚Cs, the cassette units would produce a stream of 10˚C air straight into the tops of the racks. We'd then find we'd get disk failures a couple of weeks ***(Ctd Pg.2)***

Founded in 1984, originally as Universal Power Systems Ltd, **on365** is an independent company specialising in the implementation and operation of the complete physical infrastructure of business IT and communication systems. This covers everything from power to cooling and can ultimately be a total datacentre build.

Providing total packaged solutions from concept to after-sales service, **on365** has steadily grown to the position of market leader in this field, with an established reputation for innovative power protection design, supply and application. Expansion has been achieved through a commitment to providing customers with the highest level and quality of service.

on365 has the people and the tools to understand both the technical and practical issues involved for your business, its people and its IT infrastructure requirements. This understanding extends beyond taking care of design, safety, principles of operation, future growth and after-sales services. More importantly, it looks at value and basic business principles such as 'return on investment' to ensure that the customer is furnished with a complete solution for their current business needs. Wasting expenditure worrying about the tomorrow's possible growth is practically eliminated by designing on-line expansion facilities, without the need for system downtime.

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later – our experience is that warming the kit up doesn't cause problems, but cooling it suddenly can expose you to all kinds of issues."

Like many companies which are IT-dependent, Kingston Technology has recently reached capacity in its data centre, in terms of space and power provision. To meet its anticipated needs for the medium term, Brackley has recently overseen the building out of a new room. Part of his aim was to ensure that the new facility incorporated a future proof solution for provisioning power. In addition the company wanted to resolve other issues including, as a priority, heat management and also cable management and access.

So when American Power Conversions (APC) High Power Partner, on365 demonstrated the InfraStruXure architecture, Mark Brackley was immediately impressed. "We were already fans of APC because of the Symmetra UPS we were about to replace. But in InfraStruXure we could see a well thought-out, turnkey answer to our needs. The manageability of the solution was of particular appeal, but we also liked the fact that it's not bespoke – rather it's custom built out of a standardised kit of parts which provides us with a high comfort factor."

The build-out took a matter of a couple of months. "From time of ordering, the InfraStruXure was delivered in around six weeks – in fact it took us longer to get the room prepared for the installation!" Brackley is also complimentary about on365, "Having recommended InfraStruXure, on365 also provided cabling services, electricians for the three-phase feed into the room, as well as configuring the solution, the environmental monitoring and training for data centre staff. Their professional approach and planning throughout the build-out meant they continuously showed up other contractors on the site."

"On average we suffer at least three or four power outages each year," he continues, "Although the last one struck in the middle of the night, it did last for three hours which could prove really problematical on a weekday afternoon. In the event of a power cut, we have the InfraStruXure set up to generate a text message to the duty engineer's mobile phone. Once alerted, he can simply look at the network using the browser-based software and any connected PC."

The InfraStruXure solution is rated at 10KW, scalable to 40KW, and comprises specification from APC/ on365. As for the Symmetra it replaces, Kingston Technology have re-deployed it to protect their Detfinity switch, where it currently provides 6 hours runtime in the event of a power failure.

The new computer room incorporates underfloor, forced aircooling. Although the aircon system is not on battery, Mark Brackley and his team have devised a strategy for progressive shutdown of non-critical servers which not only helps minimise heat build-up, but also extends the autonomy of mission-critical equipment. Brackley expects to use APC's PowerChute software to automate these shutdown procedures. In addition to the environmental monitoring features built into InfraStruXure, he's also added a secondary system for full redundancy. "Another feature I really like" continues Brackley "is remote monitoring."

As Mark Brackley considers the future of the IT services for which he is responsible at Kingston Technology, he envisions migrating to web services for many of the applications the company currently runs, and speaks excitedly about the potential for RFID to transform their logistics operation as well as helping with security and warranty claims. Certainly he foresees that InfraStruXure will remain at the heart of the network as Kingston Technologies power ahead in the memory market.

About Kingston Technology Company, Inc. Kingston Technology Company, Inc. is the world's largest independent manufacturer of memory products. Kingston Technology operates manufacturing facilities in Malaysia, Taiwan, China and Fountain Valley, Calif., including Payton Technology Corp., Kingston Technology's back-end processing facility supporting memory packaging, test and logistics. With the advent of Payton, Kingston Technology supports all memory processing functions from receipt of wafer to completed module. Kingston Technology serves a network of distributors, OEMs and retail customers in more than 3,000 locations worldwide.

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