



Gamma raises a glass to award-winning Virgin Wines success



About Virgin Wines

2017 may or may not turn out to be a good year for wine but it was certainly a good year for the 160 staff at online wine retailer Virgin Wines. At the start of the year the company celebrated its busiest Christmas ever with 15.4% growth in sales, then in February it was back in the limelight again - this time accepting the online retailer of the year trophy at the 2017 Drinks Retailing Awards.



First established by the Virgin Group in 2000, within five years Virgin Wines had been sold and became a subsidiary of Direct Wines, one of Britain's largest wine companies. Things changed once more in November 2013 when Virgin Wines became the subject of a management buy-out. The company has since gone from strength to strength thanks to its unique offer of wines from boutique producers, compelling loyalty schemes, top notch customer service and free delivery.

With most sales being self-service online, Virgin Wines also has a loyal following of more discerning customers who prefer to discuss their choices with expert staff over the phone. These separate sales channels mean reliable networking and telecommunications are crucial.

The challenge

Upon splitting from former parent Direct Wines in 2013, the newly reborn Virgin Wines needed to quickly migrate to a new networking and telecoms provider since it could no longer rely on the infrastructure of its previous owner. Network and telephony links were needed for the head office and an inbound/outbound call centre in Norwich, a warehousing and distribution centre in Preston and a third-party hosting and Web platform provider in Woking.

Gamma was chosen for both the networking and telephony elements of the new system, providing high speed managed data services between Norwich, Preston and Woking while at the same time delivering SIP telephony and PSTN connectivity to complement Virgin Wines' ISDN links.

This first solution from Gamma clearly impressed. When the time came to improve both resilience and capacity across the Virgin Wines' network, the wine supplier choose to stay with Gamma. The current solution adds more bandwidth together with diversely routed backup circuits while at the same time removing single points of potential failure in the network. Completed in time for the Christmas 2016 rush in sales, the upgrades more than delivered as the sales figures attest.

“Gamma understands exactly where its services can meet our needs. Gamma has done, and continues to do a good job. The risks of moving to another provider were simply not justified. Now we have a faster network that's as robust as it can be, and because Gamma has been able to achieve savings on voice provision we've now got a much more resilient service at the same cost as before.”

Karl Warham, CIO, Virgin Wines



The solution

For its initial requirement to move to a new provider we provisioned managed data links for Virgin Wines' three sites providing Ethernet, SIP and Internet connectivity to complement its existing ISDN telephony. As the business grew we were asked to provide additional capacity and resilience and this was achieved by adding further links using diverse routing. Bandwidth currently stands at 100Mbit/s into Norwich, 50Mbit/s into Preston and 20Mbit/s into the hosting provider in Woking.

ISDN circuits have been retained too, adding yet another layer of resilience into what is already a belt and braces solution. We also provided a competitive calls package which has reduced Virgin Wines' call costs considerably. This together with other savings achieved by working closely with the customer elsewhere in the system, has made it possible to deliver a scaled up, more resilient data service with no increase in overall cost.

The benefits

- Vastly improved resilience
- Improved level of back-up with diverse routing
- Significant cost reductions in voice
- Supports contingency recovery plans
- Works alongside ISDN for further resilience
- Voice savings paid for data upgrades - no extra costs
- Seamlessly meets seasonal peak demands

Interested? To find out more information on our products,

call 0333 014 0111



Jay Wright, CEO and co-owner, Virgin Wines