



Putting Disaster Recovery to the Test.

Hutton Collins

Hutton Collins Partners LLP, an innovative London-based investment firm focused on the provision of structured equity capital to private businesses in the UK and continental Europe, was established in 2002. The company invests across Western Europe and in a wide range of sectors, including leisure, media, manufacturing, business services, financial services and utilities and provides structured equity capital to help buyers and owners of businesses achieve a wide range of objectives. The principal applications of this capital include:

- Acquisition financing for buy-outs
- Recapitalisations
- Expansion requirements

As with all UK investment organisations, Hutton Collins is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) - an independent non-governmental body which was given a wide range of rule-making, investigatory and enforcement powers by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

When Hutton Collins was first established, it had no real need for a full time IT specialist. "In those days we employed just a handful of investment consultants and could not really justify a dedicated IT professional," explained Hutton Collins' Office Manager, Jackie Hart.



In-depth Knowledge

Instead, Hutton Collins approached Sol-Tec to find out more about managed IT services. "We were looking for several services," continued Jackie. "In addition to the normal IT help-desk and support functions, we were particularly anxious to ensure that we had full data backup and 24x7 server monitoring and recovery."

During the initial discussions, Hutton Collins was impressed with the capabilities and services that Sol-Tec could deliver. "Sol-Tec understood our business and recognised our requirement to comply at all levels with the regulations and mandates of the FSA," explained Jackie. "They also had developed comprehensive off-site server replication and disaster recovery services - services that were of vital importance to our business."

Hutton Collins liked what they saw and partnered with Sol-Tec for the provision of fully managed IT services, including server monitoring and a full back up and recovery service. Seven years on, Sol-Tec still provides the same services. "Each time our contract with Sol-Tec is due to be renewed, we review offerings from other service providers," said Jackie. "We have never found a company that can match Sol-Tec's capabilities, prices and the depth of understanding that they have of our business."

Comprehensive Support

Still without any internal IT specialists, Hutton Collins relies upon Sol-Tec for the day-to-day management and support of its IT infrastructure. Help-desk services are just a phone call away, ensuring that all of Hutton Collins' employees receive rapid, professional and easy-to-understand support whenever they encounter any problems. In addition to automatic backup and restore services, Sol-Tec also provides 24x7 server monitoring, identifying and proactively addressing issues before they can escalate to compromise the performance of Hutton Collins' network. Further services include anti-virus and patch/upgrade services to ensure that the infrastructure remains secure and with the latest software updates.

"As well as being available on demand, a Sol-Tec technician comes to our offices periodically for normal housekeeping activities, review our system usage and to address any questions or issues that we may have," continued Jackie. "They also help us ensure that we remain fully compliant with the FSA."

FSA Compliance

Recently, the FSA regulated that all laptops and USB storage devices should be fully encrypted to prevent sensitive financial information being accessed in the event of hardware loss or theft. Sol-Tec implemented an extremely strong, but easy-to-use encryption application across the company which complies with the FSA requirements. "Sol-Tec is up to date with FSA requirements," added Jackie. "They tell us about upcoming regulations, and discuss with us the alternatives that we have. Our Compliance Officer has a close relationship with Sol-Tec."



Disaster Recovery

Not surprisingly, the ongoing availability of its IT infrastructure is crucial to Hutton Collins' operation. Sol-Tec monitors Hutton Collins' IT infrastructure remotely and has implemented daily automated off-site server replication to ensure robust and comprehensive server and data backup. This service is complemented by a business critical offsite server recovery service that allows Hutton Collins to recover from any permanent server or temporary site disaster.

To guarantee continuous operation in the event of a complete disaster, Sol-Tec has built a remote secondary secure and robust server environment which allows all Hutton Collins employees to connect to it from any internet connection.

Hutton Collins undertakes semi annual disaster recovery tests, simulating a full failure of their infrastructure, to ensure that it has full disaster recovery capabilities at all times. "The disaster simulations are always planned in advance with the technicians at Sol-Tec," commented Jackie.

A Very Real Test

To date, all disaster recovery tests have proceeded relatively smoothly and with no problems. However, very recently Hutton Collins was able to test their ability to recover in real life.

The Metropolitan Police had become suspicious of an unattended car that had been parked very close to Hutton Collins' offices and fearing that it could be a car bomb, instructed Hutton Collins staff to remain in the office with the possibility of being evacuated should the threat turn out to be real.

Knowing that their IT infrastructure could be severely damaged in the event of an explosion, Hutton Collins immediately activated their disaster recovery process to ensure that whatever happened, staff would be able to access the replicated service via the internet.

Luckily, the potential car bomb turned out to be a false alarm, but, as Jackie says: "It's one thing to test your disaster recovery capabilities in a controlled way; it's quite another to test them in real life conditions."

Service Benefits:

- Full help-desk and support - end-user issues are quickly addressed.
- Pro-Active Server Monitoring - ensures on-going availability of servers.
- Daily automated server replication - for robust and comprehensive server and data backup.
- Anti-virus and patch/upgrade services – for a secure network and up-to-date applications.
- Enhanced Disaster Recovery - remote secondary, secure and robust server environment allows employees to connect from any internet connection.
- Complete outsourcing – no IT staff overheads.
- Full compliance with FSA regulations and mandates.

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