



CASE STUDY | British Salt

British Salt sees IT systems run smoothly

British Salt is a wholly owned subsidiary of US Salt Holdings LLC, a world-wide producer of speciality chemicals with operations in Europe and the USA. The Middlewich factory is one of the most modern in Europe, using the latest production technology and incorporating advanced ecological planning to ensure self-sufficiency, maximum production efficiency and forward looking environmental disciplines.

Key issues in this industry are quality management, quality assurance, compliance with UK/European food safety legislation and continuity of supply.

IT systems vital to the 24 hour operation of the plants

British Salt works hard to ensure that each vital area of production is protected by back-up support systems to minimise the risk of downtime. With such mission critical operations, any changes to IT systems must be undertaken with extreme care and attention to detail.

When British Salt needed to replace nine of its servers they turned to the MCW Group - with whom they already had an established working relationship – for assistance. For the IT management team at British Salt, the MCW Group offers the qualities they need: they are medium sized, local and have plenty of knowledge of this industry.



IT systems vital to the 24 hour operation of the plants

Says Dave Laundon, IT Manager at British Salt:

“As a manufacturing plant, operating 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week, we need people who have a good knowledge of our business and will come in during unsociable hours; the people at MCW are willing to do just that”

The mission critical impact of this particular project meant the server migration had to be undertaken with minimal disruption. MCW worked hard to ensure that every step of the project was carefully planned and carried out with precision; working out of hours when needed.

Following a thorough planning process, the actual server migration project was completed within 3 to 4 days, on time and within budget.

MCW Group has an ongoing relationship with British Salt, helping to maintain its IT systems. It's a relationship that works well for British Salt:

“When we need work doing, we know that team at MCW is familiar with our systems and understands our business. When we use MCW's services for new projects, or simply for routine maintenance, we know we do not have to start from scratch explaining how we work.”

MCW Group having discussed and presented a proposal to British Salt where awarded the project to undertake and complete a company wide migration from Microsoft NT 4 Server which had recently become unsupported by Microsoft to Microsoft Windows 2003 server. This also included complimenting products such as Microsoft Exchange server, which was the company standard for internal and external email services.

The project also included new hardware solutions to allow a migration to be parallel installed and user / accounting information to be migrated to the new servers.

From previous technical discussions with British Salt it was agreed that the best platform for server solutions would be standardising on Compaq products and using the range of servers to accommodate Domain Controllers, file, print servers and enterprise class servers for 24-hour mission critical database servers. The appointed consultants to the project spent an initial planning day revising the present British Salt configuration and resolving any technical issues before a migration was undertaken.

“A standard and proven practice from ourselves, is to ensure a complete and documented plan is in place before technical projects are worked on. We are fully aware that downtime during a working week or over a 24 hour period needs to be kept to a minimal level. Our experience and knowledge of planning and performing technical migrations means that for every project we have a one hundred percent no down time and seamless transition onto the new platform for clients”

remarks Kevin Williams Technical Director of MCW Group.

From commencement of the migration the consultants performed the necessary server builds, operating system installation and a seamless migration was made for all clients. All mailboxes were transferred to the new hardware and only required a simple log off and log on from the client to be activated on the new Domain and email services.

MCW and British Salt have developed a sound working relationship

Over the years, MCW has developed a good working relationship with British Salt, working on various projects including moving a computer room. This would appear at first, to have been a simple undertaking until one realises how critical even minor interruptions are to a business that operates around the clock.

Dave Laundon agrees:

“Moving the computer room included re-routing all the fibre optic and copper cabling. MCW planned the project precisely with us, so that this could be done step-by-step. They fitted in with our timetable and came in during non-standard working hours to help.”

Quality and efficiency remain at the heart of British Salt's business with the help of MCW Group

The smooth and efficient running of its IT infrastructure plays a huge role in British Salt's commitment to quality, efficiency and excellent customer service. This has been supported by the flexibility and professionalism of the MCW Group and both parties look forward to a long lasting relationship.

