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Case study

Durham University Business School

Sector Education
Service Project Management

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Project management: reducing risk and delivering on time

The decision to extend and refurbish a site is always exciting. When Durham University Business School made the strategic decision to do so at their main site at Mill Hill Lane, they called on our Project Management team to manage all aspects of the IT planning and implementation at their new site.



Julie Swinbank
Associate Director - Partnerships and Growth

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Results at a glance

- Staff and students at the Business School benefit from world-class, flexible teaching facilities.
- Completed on time and with no disruption to the day to day running of the University.

Our involvement allowed the Business School to focus on their business-as-usual activities with minimal disruption and no downtime, trusting us to get on with the job in hand. With our help, the new state-of-the-art site opened on time, using the latest technologies to enrich and add real value to the student experience, whilst delivering a progressive learning environment.

So how did we do it?

The challenge was for the new site to be ready before the start of the new education term. As with most projects of this nature, many of the IT and AV equipment could only be implemented towards the end of the overall project. This is because the building had to be secure and the infrastructure had to be ready before the equipment could be implemented.

Our job was to make sure that we worked as efficiently as possible, that we were able to negotiate suitable additional resources where necessary, and guard against time slippage. Where needed, we were pragmatic, worked flexibly, and out of hours, to reduce timescales and ensure overall timely delivery.

We worked in partnership with many other parties involved to achieve the best outcome for the Business School. As the build and our involvement progressed, there was a need to constantly monitor, reassess and reprioritise activities. We developed clear lines of communication with all stakeholders to ensure complete transparency and we were able to identify and resolve any risks before they became bottlenecks.

Where possible some projects were delivered in parallel, others were broken down and temporary bridge solutions created, that were removed as the project progressed to ensure the job was finished on time.

Our programme team not only had the delivery skills but also the technical know-how to complete the implementation phase. Each of the deliverables had to be led by a proven business case, design and engagement with the University's internal IT team. This needed to be compliant with the University policies. The solutions needed to be tested and training organised to ensure smooth and proactive take-up of the new technologies.

We managed and delivered, in partnership with the University's Computing Information Services department, the following:

- Network Installation – LAN / WAN / Wireless / Telephone
- Server Infrastructure Upgrade (NetApp SAN replacement & HP DL380 VM Hosts)
- Desktops – Define, Create & Rollout Standard Builds using SCCM
- Printing Solution
- AV Installation
- Video Editing
- Digital Signage
- Planet eStream Lecture Capture & Streaming Solution
- Video Conferencing – Lync 2013
- Planning and execution of physical moves to MHL from various locations
- Post Move Support

"Waterstons input into the project was critical to achieving the network resilience, consistent desktop environment and flexible AV provision, which enables innovation in the Business School's future teaching and research."

Kathryn Armstrong
Financial Controller

As part of the core programme of work the following benefits were realised:

- New AV technology and Microsoft Lync [M1] allows students to take part in academic lectures without being physically present and/or watch recorded sessions. This has the potential to provide significant cost and time savings and reduces the environmental impact by reducing the need for travel.
- The video editing solution provides for improved teaching materials for distance learning students. The lecture capture and streaming solution allows students to watch lectures again, or lectures that they could not attend, or watch them on-line at a different location.
- Desktop printing was removed and multi-functional printers were introduced to strategically align with the rest of the University to enable secure printing, and leverage cost and efficiency savings.
- A new network provides improved performance, security and resilience.
- The new wireless network allows staff and students the freedom to connect securely from any location in the building.
- Standard desktop builds now provide an improved and consistent experience which reduces support and maintenance costs.
- Digital signage provides timely and accurate information across the building.

As a result, the Business School now has world-class, flexible teaching facilities benefitting students, staff and academics alike.