



Transportation

Customer Story Transportation Industry

Woodland International reduces IT costs and maintains excellence in customer service with the help of PowerTerm WebConnect



An organisation's ability to provide excellent customer service often depends on the reliability of its IT systems. If key business applications are unavailable or slow, it can be hard – if not impossible – to respond to customer queries quickly and effectively.

Woodland International Transport succeeds by delivering high standards of customer service, while also maintaining strong control over its expenditure. Faced with a significant upgrade cost for its aging Citrix infrastructure, the company evaluated the alternatives and chose Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect. This solution has significantly improved the reliability and availability of Woodland's applications, enabling the company to deliver a very responsive and personal customer service. At the same time, Woodland has cut its software licensing costs significantly, which helps it to remain competitive as a global business.

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*John Stubbings
Director and Company Secretary
Woodland Group Limited*



INDUSTRY

Transportation and Logistics

CUSTOMER

Woodland International Transport Company Limited

PRODUCT

Ericom® PowerTerm® WebConnect RemoteView

CHALLENGES

- Replace end-of-life Citrix application
- Improve reliability and performance of IT systems
- Reduce ongoing IT costs
- Improve the ease of desktop deployments

SOLUTION

- Deploy Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect Remote View
- Install new HP Blade Centre and server
- Purchase PowerTerm licences to be increased over time

BENEFITS

- Improved application availability and performance
- License costs reduced significantly
- Desktop management processes greatly simplified across global business

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Woodland attributes its success to its commitment to customer service. The company started trading in 1988, and, over twenty years later, it still has many of its original customers. Today, the company has ten divisions on three continents and offers a complete range of specialist supply chain and transportation services – by sea, air and road. “It gets harder as you grow larger to keep that personal service, but it is something that we work hard at,” says John Stubbings, Director and Company Secretary at Woodland.

When the company’s existing application delivery software and hardware started to show signs of age, Woodland knew that it had to replace them as a matter of priority. It couldn’t afford to let inadequate IT systems jeopardise the quality of its operations and customer service, but it needed to keep costs down too.

A NEED FOR OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE

IT plays an important role in helping Woodland to deliver a quality service for its customers. In addition to its back-office, financial, HR and account management applications, the company also has bespoke solutions for tracking vehicles, capturing delivery signatures and communicating with drivers in cabs. “IT enables us to receive information, move it around our business and respond to customers and suppliers quickly,” says Stubbings. “The speed at which we can respond to customers makes a big difference.”

To ensure the optimum performance of its business systems, Woodland needed to update its existing IT infrastructure. Its core servers were several years old, and it relied on an old installation of Citrix application delivery software. “Our existing servers and Citrix solution were both end-of-life,” explains Jason Theobald, IT Manager at Woodland. “We therefore needed to upgrade our hardware and software as cost effectively as possible.”

At the same time, Woodland wanted to improve the ease at which applications could be distributed around the business. The company has around 400 employees in 18 locations across the UK, Ireland and the USA. With its existing Citrix-based systems, the company had to install specific client software on each individual PC around the business. This client software required more disk space, and loading, supporting and maintaining these deployments was time-consuming for the IT team.

A THIRD OF THE COST OF CITRIX

Initially, Woodland considered a number of different vendors. However, the company quickly dismissed many of these organisations because they were too small to offer the financial stability, support and ongoing technical development that Woodland felt was essential in an IT partner. The shortlist was therefore reduced to two vendors: Citrix and Ericom.

When carrying out its product evaluations, Woodland paid

particular attention to each vendor’s licensing model. “Licensing can really affect the overall price,” advises Mike Barlow, Head of IT at Woodland. “With Ericom’s solution, we discovered that we could deliver multiple applications over a single session with a single licence.”

Woodland evaluated the latest version of Citrix software thoroughly, but Ericom’s PowerTerm WebConnect met its functionality requirements at a lower cost. “If we had stayed with Citrix, the cost would

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have been a lot more,” says Barlow. “From a licensing perspective alone, we calculated that Ericom’s solution was a third of the cost of Citrix which helped offset the cost of upgrading the hardware.”

Woodland was also impressed with the way that PowerTerm WebConnect delivers applications via a browser or desktop agents. “This means that we can embed applications into our Intranet and deliver them online,” says Theobald. “It makes it far easier for us to support small offices that may initially only have one or two IT users.”

A QUICK AND EASY INSTALLATION

Initially, Woodland asked Ericom to install PowerTerm WebConnect. However, in the end, the company found that it could easily carry out the task by itself. Theobald explains: “I attended an Ericom training session and gained accreditation. The two-



day course was very comprehensive and covered everything from installation and customisation to potential user issues. Following this, I felt confident enough to handle the implementation by myself. The training was certainly worthwhile."

Using the knowledge gained from the training course, Theobald was able to easily install PowerTerm WebConnect on the company's new servers. "The implementation was very easy and went very smoothly," recalls Theobald with pride. "We completed it in the course of a week, but probably could have done it in a day; it was that simple. The assistance that Ericom provided during this time was excellent."

Woodland has found that PowerTerm WebConnect is very easy to manage on a day-to-day basis. "It just works!" says Theobald. "There is very little administration required and even the delivery of new applications to different locations around the world is so quick."

A BIG IMPROVEMENT IN AVAILABILITY

PowerTerm WebConnect is a server-based computing solution that allows users to access business applications from virtual desktops, terminal servers and legacy computers, such as UNIX. All applications are stored and managed centrally, which enables companies to reduce IT complexity and desktop management costs. Woodland currently uses PowerTerm WebConnect to deliver twelve windows and UNIX-based applications to around sixty users across the business.

The combination of PowerTerm WebConnect, plus the new hardware installed at the same time, has made a big difference to the performance and availability of Woodland's IT



systems. The solution is secure, easy to use and highly robust. "We get far fewer support calls relating to connection issues or session issues than we did on the Citrix platform," notes Theobald. "By implementing PowerTerm WebConnect, we have maintained or bettered the user experience."

Now, the company has the reliable, 24/7 service that is so important for a global business. "In the past, there were often delays and times when we couldn't access our accounting systems, and this prevented us from providing a speedy response to customer queries," says Stubbings. "Our applications are now readily available to use at all times."

A WORLD OF POSSIBILITY

With its commitment to excellent customer service, it is perhaps not surprising that Woodland is continuing to expand globally. PowerTerm WebConnect is ideal for growing businesses, because it makes it very easy for organisations to add new desktops and deploy new applications. Woodland recently moved one of its HR team to a new office to cover the northern part of the country. "This would have been more of a technical challenge prior to the use of PowerTerm WebConnect," says Theobald.

The company's use of PowerTerm WebConnect will make it easy for the company to deploy its applications to remote offices and allow its partners to securely access selected solutions.

In the future, Woodland plans to use PowerTerm WebConnect to make certain applications accessible to several third parties. For example, it is currently considering giving key customers access to its third party logistics and packing solutions, so that they can record and view which goods are in which cartons on which vehicles.

A RESPONSIVE, PERSONAL SERVICE

From the outset of the business relationship, Woodland has had a very positive experience working with Ericom. "Ericom is very easy to deal with," says Theobald. "Support people know me and remember my previous queries when I call. They are very supportive."

"Ericom sits very well with our own service ethos," concludes Stubbings. "Just as we aim to deliver a responsive, personal service for our customers, we feel that we receive a responsive and personal service from Ericom. We are ideal partners."

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