

Case study

WSP transforms customer service with power and mobility



HP laptops and workstations present the right image for worldwide engineering consultancy

Industry

Engineering and design

Objective

Standardise on one vendor for the provision of laptops and workstations

Approach

Gave staff the option to choose the machines they liked best

IT matters

- Delivers the power to run demanding CAD programs
- Provides efficient next day support
- Offers consistency of design for future developments

Business matters

- Enables mobility for staff to take their complex designs to clients
- Shares a clear roadmap for the future
- Supports staff productivity and company image



“The power is massive with the HP ZBook Studio Mobile Workstation. It is now our default for mobile high intensity work and it’s only going to grow as we think of even more mobile working options.”

– Neil Traxler, head of IT, WSP



Creating a consistent fleet

Engineering consultancy WSP has standardised on HP laptops and workstations. It has also recently acquired two large companies, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Mouchel. Their 5,000 staff will now also migrate from the previous supplier onto HP machines.



Challenge

Need for standardisation

Look across the London skyline and one of the most striking buildings is the 95-storey Shard. Look to the UK's future and it's difficult to miss plans for the HS2 high-speed rail link. These and a host of other major projects such as the Hinkley Point nuclear power station all have one thing in common, they have or will have significant involvement by WSP.

One of the world's leading engineering professional services consulting firms, WSP employs 36,000 people in 500 offices across 40 countries. WSP works on anything to do with the built environment and structural design, and in addition to more iconic jobs, its projects include mechanical and electric contracts, ventilation, lighting, roads, bridges and even traffic light systems.

Over 130 years, the company has grown through the acquisition of dozens of businesses in the United States, UK and Canada. The most notable was its takeover of leading professional services firm Parsons Brinckerhoff forming the new company that is now known as WSP. The latest is the acquisition of international infrastructure company Mouchel.

However, while acquisitive growth can be good for corporate development an unwanted offshoot can be inconsistencies with the IT and that was an issue that WSP wanted to rectify. HP personal systems were the standard at WSP but both Parsons Brinckerhoff and Mouchel used equipment from another vendor.

"Staff at Parsons Brinckerhoff were running very old computers so we wanted to replace them and to standardise on a common environment which would make life as easy as possible," says WSP's head of IT, Neil Traxler.

With many engineers and designers using Computer Aided Design (CAD) programs to show designs and plans to clients at their own premises, one of the key challenges facing WSP was providing its staff all the necessary power and performance with a mobility capability not possible with static desktop machines.



Solution

Power and mobility

Most of WSP's worldwide staff already use HP machines and 70% of the fleet are using laptops so the company did not look elsewhere.

"We have a trusted relationship with HP and it is market leading so we asked what HP devices it could recommend," says Traxler.

The result was the purchase of 5,000 units. Of these, 2,000 have already been delivered and 3,000 will be supplied before the end of 2017, including 1,700 into the newly acquired Mouchel over a period of time. The company has standardised on four core products - the HP EliteBook 820 and 850 Notebook PCs, HP ZBook Studio Mobile Workstations and HP Z440 Workstations. Staff roles govern what machines they have. Those who do not need a very high-end configuration use EliteBooks. Client facing engineers and designers use the high-spec ZBook Studio and those who are not client facing use the classic Z440 static workstations.

"When we first moved to HP we obtained laptop models from different vendors and let general staff from the business come and look at them. They voted on what they liked best and HP won.

"The look and feel are massively important and the feedback was that the HP machines looked more professional. They made the others seem tinny," says Traxler.

The machines were supplied by re-seller, Insight, and deployed by WSP's IT team who also did the imaging – a task which will in future be taken over by Insight.

"We have a core desktop image through System Center Configuration Manager. We are linking the systems together and on specific applications. We've got Software Center so users can pick what they want and install it themselves," explains Traxler.

The equipment is covered by standard HP Care Pack warranty with 'next day onsite' cover.

Customer at a glance

Software

- HP EliteBook 820 and 850 Notebook PCs
- HP ZBook Studio Mobile Workstations
- HP Z400 Workstation

HP Services

- HP Care Pack support with next business day onsite cover

Benefits

Clear roadmap

Not only is WSP happy with the functionality of the HP machines including weight, battery life, graphics, reliability and performance but staff also like their appearance.

“They are happy because these are good tools for the job,” says Traxler. “Image and profile are important because we are a big business and we work with other big businesses. The look and feel of the HP machines are impressive and the pricing is comparable. You get what you pay for.”

The company is also seeing the increasingly important benefits of mobility and power, “We had CAD applications on high performing desktops as standard three years ago and the heavy 3D models that we created were massive in size so we couldn’t really share them with clients. It was all desk-based and we couldn’t collaborate easily,” says Traxler.

“Now that we have been introduced to all the mobile workstations that HP offer, it has enabled us to become more mobile, to go out to clients and show them their new buildings or new roads and bridges before they are even built. The power is massive with the Studio model and it is now our default for mobile high intensity work and it’s only going to grow as we think of even more mobile working options.”

The after-sales support provided by HP is also appreciated: “If anything goes wrong we know there is going to be someone onsite the next day to fix it and that works well. The number of callouts we have had through my internal helpdesk monitoring is much lower than with our previous vendor because of HP’s build quality.

“With mobile workstations we can now bring our CAD design projects to the clients where before, it had to be the other way around.”

– Neil Traxler, head of IT, WSP

With the previous supplier, we could have five laptops in one office being fixed by one callout engineer a day. Things were breaking and they couldn’t fix them quickly enough, but that has all changed by moving to HP.”

As well as the technology, Traxler is also delighted with the HP account management, speed of delivery and close relationship that has been formed: “We now know that everything is compatible and that there is a good product roadmap. We are not subjected to massive changes in the construction of the HP machines so we know we have a reliable model that we can develop applications and drivers for over a fixed period of time.

“The relationship we have with HP is important as it lets me know what is coming next and where I need to focus my team. We also work closely together on stock levels and it’s a well-oiled machine. HP presents new technologies to me so I can see the way it is going, how they are thinking and how that may be of benefit to my business. All these things are valuable and we will continue to work with HP into the foreseeable future for sure.”

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