



'Network Box has exceeded all our expectations. The solution is robust, intelligent and comprehensive, the Network Box team is dedicated and flexible.'

Graham Allmond
Managing Director



INDUSTRY Recruitment

BACKGROUND The Pluswork Group is a temporary and permanent recruitment specialist with offices in the North West of England. The company has over 30 years experience providing people on short or long-term hire, or permanent recruitment to large and small companies and organisations across several public and private sectors, including health, logistics and distribution, and manufacturing.

REQUIREMENT The nature of Pluswork's business means that it has recruitment specialists at various office locations, as well as on the road visiting candidates and clients; and this posed a wide variety of IT security issues. In addition, email communications are fundamental to its business and frequently contain confidential candidate information, including home addresses and phone numbers. Therefore, it was critical for Pluswork to protect its network from the latest internet threats with an all-in-one unified threat management (UTM) solution.

Without an internal IT team in place, Pluswork wanted to work with a company that offered a fully configured and remotely managed system that would provide all the protection they needed including content, virus and spam filtering and protection from the latest threats such as spyware and Trojans.

The company also wanted a solution that would offer ongoing and immediate security updates without the need for the company to constantly monitor it themselves or spend valuable time downloading updates themselves.

All these requirements made Network Box the natural choice for Pluswork.

Says Graham Allmond, Managing Director, Pluswork: "We had a complex variety of needs and knew that it would be difficult to find a fully managed, unified solution that could address all our needs and that doesn't require extra resource to monitor and manage it. Network Box's PUSH technology was a real stand-out feature of the solution. Not having an internal IT support infrastructure, it was crucial that we could rely on Network Box to remotely keep our infrastructure secure 24/7."

SOLUTION How the solution addressed Pluswork's range of needs:

- Taking the risk out of remote working With employees often working remotely, the biggest threat Pluswork faced was from virus-infected PCs and laptops bought into the office and connected to the network. Allmond explains: "We had several issues with viruses infecting our network and the only option was to ensure we had a solution that would identify virus-infected PCs and laptops and prevent them from spreading across our network."

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This case study was authorised by Pluswork Group on 21 February, 2006.

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- Push technology

A core benefit of the Network Box managed service is the use of push technology to update protection against new threats in less than one minute and confirm the success of the update. This ensures that customer networks benefit from the smallest possible window of exposure to new threats. These updates are provided by 12 network operations centres across the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- Controlled web access = cost savings

It wasn't just viruses that were a concern for Pluswork. Like many companies the availability of Internet access proved a mixed blessing. Employees began to benefit from having increased information at their fingertips but Pluswork soon realised that this could sometimes be abused.

"We started to realise that Internet access was being abused and in one case one member of staff was sometimes spending up to three quarters of his day surfing non-work related websites over a period of two to three months. We could see that his productivity was reduced but until we introduced Network Box we didn't know why. Upon closer investigation Network Box allowed us to check which sites he was using and at what time of day. We calculated that over time this could have cost the company over £10,000 per year!

"Whilst we support the use of the Internet in providing valuable information to help our employees do their job, this level of use was not sustainable, and so Network Box has enabled us to keep a tighter control over the way the Internet is used by our staff. We still enable most people to access non work-related sites during free time – lunchtimes, pre and post work – but putting tighter measures in place has helped us gain back a lot of lost time"

"The solution also enables us to configure individual machines to give different access rights to different employees – depending on how much time they need to spend online. "

- Linking the company together

Pluswork has a network of offices throughout the North West of England, all linked together via a VPN. In addition, Pluswork's accounts and payroll data is stored and managed separately by Beacon Computer Services, Pluswork's financial applications support company.

When the company started to use email to communicate outside the company the risk of viruses became a real issue. As such, there was a need to ensure that information could be shared freely but securely between offices and Network Box has ensured that security is assured across the network.

- A managed solution

Outsourcing the management burden has allowed the company to dedicate its time to building the business and servicing our clients. Says Allmond: "We feel that Network Box really is a managed service solution that offers true 360 degree protection. Our main focuses were securing our private network, controlling Internet access and protection from all Internet threats and it was cheaper and more effective to consolidate our security requirements with an integrated service, than have lots of disparate, bolted-on services providing different functions."

"As it's a fully managed service, we don't need to do anything with it but it's not like outsourcing your security without maintaining any control at all. We can have as much or as little control as we want but we know that if an emergency occurs, Network Box will be on the phone straight away – that's customer service."

CONCLUSION "Network Box has exceeded all our expectations. The solution is robust, intelligent and comprehensive, the Network Box team is dedicated and flexible – I know that I can call with any concern and that it will be dealt with effectively.

Having Network Box has saved Pluswork the equivalent of an IT person's salary. I'd give Network Box 10 out of 10!"

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