



“This is the company you want to work with.”

Shire Leasing wanted a reliable, long-term IT partner and were introduced to Axess Systems – a reliable and trusted partner. Axess helps Shire support, manage, and enhance its IT infrastructure with its virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), virtualisation and data centre, backup, and network expertise.

Client

Shire Leasing plc is a specialist provider of funding and finance solutions to UK small and medium sized enterprises. Enabling them to acquire everything from computers to coffee machines, cows and cars.

Shire employs around 200 people, who operate from its head office in Tamworth, but with the option of hybrid working.

“For as long as I’ve been at Shire, which is now over 22 years, we’ve always been Citrix based,” notes Graham Coe, IT Director, at Shire Leasing plc.

“Desktops are delivered via Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops, which made COVID

rather easy to deal with,” comments Graham. “Fundamentally we were set-up ready to go, and the only thing we needed to do was increase the NetScaler capacity.”

Citrix also helps to reduce the management burden on Shire’s three-person infrastructure team.

“I like the way we do things and as a result of Citrix we’ve got thin clients,” observes Graham. “Those little machines require minimal intervention and just carry on working. We only have to update servers and one golden image.”



At a glance

Shire Leasing had a series of poor experiences with IT partners, before working with Axess Systems.

Now, working with Axess, it has a “valued partner that is like an extension of Shire”

- Axess provides technical skills to enhance infrastructure
- Building Citrix, VMware, Microsoft, data centre and network infrastructure
- Second- and third-line support
- Fully managed backup service





Business driver

But for implementations, upgrades, and more complex technical queries Shire needs to draw on the skills of technical specialists.

"We went through a period of working with various different partners, and we didn't have particularly good experiences," remarks Graham.

"We'd find a company to do something, but later it transpired that they were using a third-party for implementation," Graham reveals. "And it was causing issues down the line, particularly around support and upgrades."

"We wanted someone a bit more responsible and an ongoing relationship," he expands. "For us, a good partner is someone that knows us, understands our environment, knows how we operate, and can ensure that the solutions provided fit in with everything we do."

Solution

Graham was introduced to Axess Systems through a technical contact in 2009, and they have been working together ever since.

"Experiences taught me a long time ago that the very large companies are very impersonal, and you're just another contract," declares Graham.

"With Axess the whole experience changes considerably, and you're not just a tick in a box anymore, you're a valued customer," says Graham. "Because we feel like a valued customer, Axess becomes a valued partner, and it becomes a self-sustaining relationship that grows."

Axess provides Graham with the technical expertise to develop and manage Shire's IT infrastructure. This includes a hardened data centre, utilising VMware vSphere, Dell hardware, and Veeam to provide immutable backup, plus Shire's network infrastructure. As well as Microsoft technologies, Citrix virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and NetScalers, and LG thin clients with the IGEL operating system.

A second- and third-line support service gives Shire on-demand access to technical back-up, with escalation to vendors. While a fully managed backup service ensures that the Shire team don't need to worry about the security and integrity of data backup.

Benefits

"The whole VDI approach is the better way for us and Axess Systems has been instrumental in building that, and maintaining, supporting, upgrading, and enhancing it ever since," notes Graham.

He continues, "One of the key benefits for us is that Axess challenges and advises when things could be done better."

"Axess pushes our systems forwards as much as we do, and it's not just left to us."

"We don't have the time or resource to keep everything up to date ourselves, so the backup service Axess provides is invaluable. It means we can do the things we need to do

internally to support the business," describes Graham.

He adds, "Because the people stay the same for a long time, it's almost like an extension of Shire, they are almost part of the Shire family. It's a very informal, friendly, and open relationship with all the people there."

"I know that I can always pick up the phone or message on Teams and say what do you think about this. I don't ever feel at arm's length."

"Axess' service is excellent," confirms Graham. "But nothing ever goes right 100% of the time and you can guarantee that at some point something isn't going to go to plan. That's when you really see what a company is made of, and that's what keeps us with Axess: we know that when something isn't quite right it will be looked at, and we'll sort it out and make things better."

"We had a major incident where we needed very urgent support, and Axess put a senior consultant in our office to get things sorted, and there's not many companies that would do that," observes Graham.

"Axess has huge technical ability, and there's a lot of things I'm impressed with," comments Graham. "But I'm most impressed with how Axess takes the time to align its portfolio and support to our business."

"Axess Systems are very much an extension of your team and are always there to help, support, improve, and enhance. Basically, they've got your back", states Graham. "If you want a company that will be there to help you when the chips are down, then this is the company you want to work with."