



FUTABA TENNECO

REASSESSMENT LEADS TO REDESIGN

Burnley-based Toyota parts manufacturer, Futaba Tenneco, had been outsourcing their IT support for a number of years, having formed a strong relationship with a particular IT technician.

As the individual moved organisations, so did Futaba Tenneco, changing IT support providers to maintain the status quo by working with this trusted advisor who'd built up an understanding of the Futaba Tenneco infrastructure.

One move resulted in the sale of Futaba Tenneco's contract, due to the takeover of one of the support providers, causing yet more change. "We'd changed support provider 3 times in 12 months, but were hesitant to let go as we needed more stability and continue from our provider", said Justine Heaton, Finance Director at Futaba Tenneco. advice to help upskill teams and futureproof systems.

ICT



SECTOR
Manufacturing



SOLUTIONS
Hybrid Cloud Migration
End-to-End Support





Making a Change

After a third change of IT support provider, Futaba Tenneco decided to take stock of their current IT performance and conduct a thorough SWOT analysis and benchmarking exercise. Results revealed that though the business infrastructure was stable, it was operating on inefficient servers and ageing software such as Office 2003 and Windows Server 2003.

The opportunity to take advantage of technology advancements to improve business performance became apparent. "We would have stayed static as nothing was broken, but servers needed replacing as they were over six years old. My predecessor had invested in laptops that included licences, so we were not operating on an Open licensing agreement, which was costly and not the best way of staying up to date", continues Heaton.

Futaba Tenneco places a large reliance upon its IT function, which includes significant use of Sage. Heaton explains, "We use Sage as our manufacturing and

scanning system. Because we're shipping an average of 10-15 lorry loads per day, often on a just-in-time basis, if our systems go down for more than an hour or two, it creates major, major problems and the business grinds to a halt. We can't pick, scan or ship, and that means Toyota doesn't get any parts."

With critical business performance and the need to upgrade in mind, the search began for an organisation that could implement an infrastructure upgrade and provide reliable long-term IT support.

Finding a Partner

With Managing Director, Kevin Schofield, and Finance Director, Justine Heaton, responsible for search and selection, a shortlist of three possible organisations was drawn up, including the existing provider.

"Although the existing provider was OK and things were ticking over, when we asked for advice on how to improve performance and do things differently they didn't inspire us, or give us the confidence to make major decisions and investments. We were looking for a business that could lead us, not just quote for what we asked for", Heaton describes.

Futaba Tenneco was interested in Chess because they were local to them and had successfully implemented a handful of smaller projects previously. A visit to Chess Head Office really impressed Futaba. "When we went onsite to see the business for ourselves, we realised Chess was different to other providers. Instead of rows of technical people you couldn't speak to, everyone seemed happy to work there. We got a warm feeling as they were so open and honest. It made a big difference to our decision."

A Change of Thought

When Futaba Tenneco first approached Chess, it was to update its existing on-premises infrastructure to be more up to date, secure and resilient, and to work with an organisation it could rely on to support its business via a competent and responsive helpdesk. As discussions developed, Chess uncovered more information about the functionality that was required, and presented a possible alternative; a move to the cloud.

“Going onsite to Chess gave us the confidence we were making the right decision. Culturally they're a great business to work with, very open and honest and more engaging than other IT companies we've worked with.”

**JUSTINE HEATON, FINANCE DIRECTOR,
FUTABA TENNECO**





“Chess was onsite as long as was needed to get everything right, If things took a little longer than Chess had quoted us, the engineers just got on and did the job, and didn't surprise us with requests for additional budget.”

“As we understood more about the core performance that was required for users, Microsoft Office 365 was the obvious answer. We could give users the tools and functionality they needed easily with no need for Futaba to invest in server hardware, making the business less reliant on its on-premise infrastructure”, Gareth Jagger from Chess explains.

“There are many ways Futaba can exploit cloud and virtualisation, but it cannot change overnight. A simple migration to Office 365 enabled Futaba to utilise the scale and flexibility of cloud technology, but there was some hesitancy to change. If we had not listened and insisted on a completely cloud hosted solution we probably wouldn't be working together. You can give advice, but you have to listen to the customer, and how they choose to work is their decision and you have to respect that.”

“There was hesitancy from our Japanese associates about moving to Office 365 as 'always on' email is of critical importance. However, Chess gave us some references to talk to, and that gave us the confidence to trust that Chess knew what they were doing and were guiding us in the right direction.”

Having decided upon a hybrid cloud migration alongside an end-to-end support contract, Chess began

the process of upgrading Futaba Tenneco's systems, desktops and servers. Chess virtualised all Futaba's data to HP servers and HP 3Par storage. Due to the superior storage capability of HP 3Par, Futaba Tenneco eradicated numerous physical servers, and now only requires 2 servers and 2 nodes that are managed efficiently by Windows Server 2008 R2.

As part of the project, Chess updated hardware devices that were more than 3 years old, providing users with up to date laptops for optimum performance. Futaba Tenneco were thoroughly impressed by Chess's commitment to getting the project completed properly, “Chess was onsite as long as was needed to get everything right. If things took a little longer than Chess had quoted us, the engineers just got on and did the job, and didn't surprise us with requests for additional budget”.

The organisation was surprised at how seamless the implementation was, “Chess had HP on site for two days, and when we flicked the switch nobody knew what had been done. Even now people onsite are probably not aware they're using cloud technology”

An Infrastructure that Delivers

Since the move to a new infrastructure and the cloud, Futaba Tenneco has experienced a wealth of benefits. The move to an Opex payment structure through a standardised per user, per month has been really useful. “Billing in this way helps our cash flow situation, and I know exactly where we are on the licenses because Chess looks after that. It is all tickling along nicely.”

Due to the fundamental requirement in upgrade of servers and other hardware, Futaba cannot compare like for like in terms of direct cost savings associated with the project. “What we've achieved here is 'cost avoidance'. If we hadn't upgraded we ran the risk of our systems going down. If no lorries are shipping the whole plant would have to work over the weekend to catch-up. If I had to put a cost on that it would be over £100,000, and the costs to Toyota much higher. They report something like £50,000 per minute if they can't operate properly. It's just huge, and all of that risk has gone away.”

For More Information Please Get in Touch

Call Us Now: **0808 149 6867**

Web: ChessICT.co.uk



Summary

Working closely with Chess throughout the project, Justine Heaton was immensely pleased with the changes made to Futaba Tenneco's IT setup.

After a seamless implementation, during which Chess did all it could to deliver the business solution Futaba Tenneco needed, the biggest testament that can be paid to the infrastructure upgrade is that it works and delivers value.

Heaton summarises, "We're 2 or 3 months in and everything is fine. Chess did such a good job, I would be happy to act as a referee. Going onsite to Chess gave us the confidence we were making the right decision. Culturally they're a great business to work with, very open and honest and more engaging than other IT companies we've worked with, and competitive on price. I wouldn't hesitate in recommending Chess."

About Chess

At Chess, we design and deliver award winning bespoke ICT solutions and services to meet your needs.

Our 25 years' experience, 80 strong ICT Team, outstanding customer service and technical expertise are just a few of the things that sets us apart. But the real key to our ICT partnerships lie within our people. We're passionate about technology and unlocking its potential, we're focused on listening, understanding, unearthing unique solutions and building trusted relationships. Our people are committed to our core values: Quality and Passion which is why we're fast becoming one of UK's most trusted ICT partners.

But the real key to our ICT partnerships lie within our people. We're passionate about technology and unlocking its potential, we're focused on listening, understanding, unearthing unique solutions and building trusted relationships. Our people are committed to our core values: Quality and Passion which is why we're fast becoming one of UK's most trusted ICT partners.



For More Information Please Get in Touch

Call Us Now: **0808 149 6867**

Web: **ChessICT.co.uk**